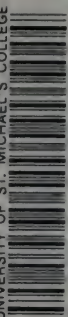


UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE




3 1761 01984961 1

My Life in the Convent



BX
4216
.S55
A3
1892
SMC

MARGARET L. SHEPHERD,
NUN "SISTER MAQUAENE ADOLPHINE."



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

MY LIFE IN THE CONVENT:

OR THE

MARVELLOUS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

OF

MARGARET L. SHEPHERD

(SISTER MAGDALENE ADELAIDE),

CONSECRATED PENITENT OF THE ARNO'S COURT
CONVENT, BRISTOL, ENGLAND.

ELEVENTH EDITION.

MARGARET L. SHEPHERD,

PUBLISHER.

CANADA & NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA.



COPYRIGHT IN 1892

BY

MARGARET L. SHEPHERD.



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I. OUT OF THE SUNSHINE INTO THE GLOOM.	7
II. MY MOTHER'S SECRET SORROW .. .	14
III. ACROSS THE OCEAN	30
IV. MY FATHER'S SIN	37
V. THE POWER OF THE PRIEST	45
VI. FATHER EGAN	52
VII. NOT AS THE PRIEST, BUT AS A MAN ..	62
VIII. STRUGGLING AGAINST TEMPTATION ..	77
IX. THE MASK OF DECEIT	82
X. BETWEEN MY LOVED ONES AND ME ..	97
XI. THE CHILD OF A PRIEST	107
XII. A CRUSHED AND BROKEN HEART ..	122
XIII. FOR MY DARLING'S SAKE.. ..	132
XIV. TO FORGIVE AND TO FORGET	145
XV. MY GREAT MISTAKE	158
XVI. ENTERING THE CONVENT	163
XVII. DAILY ROUTINE OF LIFE	178
XVIII. A HELL UPON EARTH	190
XIX. SOLD TO ROME	199
XX. THE WILLING SLAVE	209
XXI. TRIED AS BY FIRE.. ..	219
XXII. THE CURSE OF THE CHURCH	237
XXIII. ONE OF GOD'S SERVANTS	244
XXIV. IN WIDE FIELDS	354

MY LIFE IN A CONVENT.

CHAPTER I.

OUT OF THE SUNSHINE INTO THE GLOOM.

I WAS born in the fort of Lahore, the capital of the Punjaub, on the 8th day of September, 1859, of Irish Roman Catholic parents, and baptized when I was three days old by Father Marianus. My father was attached to the Horse Artillery, and served in the East India Company's service. Previously to my birth, he fought in the Scinde and Punjaub campaign, was wounded, and won several medals as well as the "Gwalian Star." He also took part in the terrible Indian Mutiny, and died ULTIMATELY from a wound he received in the engagement at Delhi. Both of my parents were model practical Roman Catholics; and as our house in the Fort was next door to the Catholic church, my father, especially as death approached nearer, would spend many hours before the altar in meditation and prayer.

Unfortunately, I have no personal recollection of my father, for I was only four years old when his death occurred; but many who knew him remarked that both in appearance and disposition I was his double, as far as one of my sex could be. My mother held the memory of

my father in deep veneration; and she never divested herself of the garments of widowhood.

Almost immediately after my father's death my mother sent me to the Convent School, a branch of which was in Agra, and another in Simla. My parents at my birth had dedicated me to God. It was the earnest desire of both before they died that I should, if I lived, become a nun; and probably it was with this object in view that I was sent at such a tender age to school; so that my earliest recollections are associated with the black-robed sisters, and the quiet hush of convent life; and side by side with the sweet-faced image of my mother rises up that of gentle Sister Agatha, who specially cared for me. Between these two souls there seemed a bond of deep love. My mother never said much about my father, but whilst in her presence one felt impressed that she had undergone some great sorrow. How deep that sorrow was to her (as a Catholic) I learned in after years, whilst her soul was hovering on the borders of eternity; and then she only divulged it to me under obedience to her confessor, who hoped it would be an inducement to me to enter a religious life; and the shadow that rested on my mother's life has entered and cast its reflection on mine. And to-night, many who judge me harshly would feel more sympathy for my shortcomings if they knew the struggle I have had to undergo all these years. •

I presume my school-days passed away and were in nearly all respects similar to those of any other young

girl educated in a convent boarding-school. Strict regularity is observed, and from the moment the rising-bell rings until dark each hour has its allotted task. One of the first principles instilled into the mind of the pupil is immediate response to the calls of duty. Every day interrogation takes place, when each Catholic and Protestant alike is questioned separately and publicly if she has transgressed any of the rules, and, if guilty, a penance is imposed. Should the culprit be a Protestant, she is generally made to copy a page of history several times over during the recreation hour; and if a Catholic, in addition to this penance she would have a few prayers or rosaries to repeat.

The general impression among Protestants is that girls receive a far superior education in a convent school to that in any Protestant institution. This is, however, a great mistake. A convent education cannot, under ANY circumstances, be called a practical one, and will never fit the pupil in after years (should necessity require it) to teach in any advanced school. Most of the time is devoted to accomplishments, and the sisters will find out just what particular accomplishment (if any) the pupil may have an aptitude for, and will accordingly cultivate it.

The education, as a whole, is superficial. Protestant parents, in confiding their children to the Roman Catholic sisters, do not seem to realise that they are surrounding them with all the influences of Roman Catholicism. Such parents seem only *too* glad to believe that the sisters never

interfere with the religious principles of their Protestant pupils, and by this means try to relieve themselves of the moral responsibility they are under to God. Many, however, in after years shed bitter tears when they find that the Church has succeeded in capturing their loved one. Oh, how much would parents endure, if by so doing they could recall the unwise, unjust act of committing the child of their love to the subtle influences of the Catholic sisterhood! A Roman Catholic priest or nun is justified in breaking the most sacred promise made to a Protestant, if by so doing the interests of the Church be served. In fact, no promise is made by either without mental reservation. I remember distinctly two Protestant girls (sisters), Amelia and Louise Davis, who both embraced Roman Catholicism, and became most devout and aggressive workers in the interests of the Church—so much so that their father and mother, who resided in Annarkulla, the civil cantonment or station, three miles from Fort Lahore, were induced also to be baptized into the Church. Then Harriet Courtenay, another Protestant, also gave up her faith, and after she had finished her education entered the novitiate, but died a few months afterwards; and I remember distinctly that the morning of the day she died she was allowed to make her final vows, a dispensation being granted for the purpose, in consequence of her hopeless recovery.

To me, during my school days, the sisters were ever kind and considerate. I remember that they took particular pains in instructing me in the art of church embroidery

and fine needlework, also writing out extracts from the lives of the Saints, and special prayers of St. Alphonsus, St. Francis De Sales, and others; and Father Burke would often, whilst I was at confession, speak to me of the holiness of a life of meditation and prayer. But how often would I get myself into trouble! I was always ready to enter into any mischief; in fact, I believe I was the chief ringleader in all practical jokes, etc. I detested geography, and amused myself sometimes, when locked up during recreation hour for some breach of rules, by cutting holes in the maps around the room, so that when geography day came around, and the map was taken off the wall and placed on an easel, the holes could be seen quite distinctly. Then, again, how often would I take off the black linen cloth covering the blackboard, and draw upon it the caricature of our dancing-master!

But my chief amusement consisted in securing a number of baby frogs and carrying them into school. I would, as soon as our grammar class was called up, amuse the girls and myself by letting them out, one at a time, and soon a dozen of them would be hopping over the floor. Of course, this would raise a titter, and I would be penanced. How the old associations come back to me to-night, and I fancy once more I can see the faces of my school friends and hear the merry laughter resounding on the play-ground! Yes, they were happy days—the happiest I ever spent—when no shadows came to darken my path, and life was one happy dream. But how well I remember the first cloud

that darkened the horizon ! It came when I was fifteen years old.

I mentioned at the commencement of this chapter that my dear mother always gave those who were in her presence an impression that she had suffered from some great sorrow. I remember how often, whilst home for the holidays, I have seen her steal into the oratory she had fitted up adjoining her bedroom, and how she would remain there for hours—and many times I have heard her sobbing. Oh, *how* I loved my mother ! To me she was the very impersonation of all that was pure and good. There was a bond between her and me—the bond of true, confiding love. Never mind what I might be guilty of : I could go to my mother with confidence, knowing that whilst she might reprimand, and perhaps even punish me, yet she did it in love and for my own good. But one bright, beautiful June evening, whilst playing with my school friends on the play-ground, Sister Agatha came towards us ; my name was heard, and running to the sister, who held in her hands a letter, I asked her why she had called me. Then with tears in her eyes, and taking my hand in hers, she drew me towards her and said : “ *Dear child, your mother is very ill, and has sent for you !* ”

I looked at her for one moment, hardly realizing what she had said, and then as the truth burst upon me it seemed as if all the sunshine died out and heavy clouds were around me. And I gasped out : “ Is she dead ? ”

“ No, my child,” answered Sister Agatha. “ Not dead,

but very ill; so you must get ready to start for home at once. Your ayah and bearer are both here to escort you home."

Ah me, how I sobbed out my grief! and, as Sister Agatha led me away, many of my playmates came up to embrace me and say a few words of loving sympathy. And so I passed out from the sunshine of girlhood's happiest days and crossed over the threshold of a life that was to be for me one of sorrow and vicissitude.

But to-night I look back to that beautiful June evening, and the tears gather in my eyes as once more the whole scene rises before me. Where are they now, the friends of my girlhood? Many of them doubtless married, and are happy wives and mothers. Others are walking the streets of the golden city, clad in their robes of righteousness, with palms in their hands, singing the praises of Him whom they loved so well whilst on earth. And I alone, of all that happy joyous band, have left the faith of my fathers. I have passed through bitter sorrow and temptation, and to-night, as the utter loneliness of my position reveals itself to me, I bow down my head, and, unable to keep back the sobs that arise from a heart full of grief, I yet am able through grace to say, "NOT MY WILL, FATHER, BUT THINE BE DONE."

CHAPTER II.

MY MOTHER'S SECRET SORROW.

How long and wearisome the journey home seemed! How I wept and dreaded I should arrive home too late! At last we came within sight of the Fort, and as we passed in through the first and second gates, and then up the steep incline, my heart kept beating as I looked out of the "*dak gharrie*,"* expecting every moment that one of the house servants would meet us and deliver the message that mamma was dead. When, however, we drove up to the door, I leaped out of the gharrie without waiting for the servants to assist me, and I was about to rush into my mother's room; but my dear old mammy—my ayah—would not allow it. She made me first take a bath and brought me a cup of tea, and when I was calm permitted me to see mamma. Oh, how pale and wasted she looked as she lay upon the light bamboo couch, dressed in a white muslin robe! Could it be possible that this was my mother? I was unable to speak, but sinking down by her side I buried my head in my hands and sobbed out: "OH, MAMMA! MAMMA!" She allowed me to kneel there. I knew she, too, was sobbing; but by and by her hand was caressing me and smoothing down my hair. We did not speak; our grief was too deep for words. She was all in

* "Travelling stage-coach."

all to me—my mother! my gentle, beautiful mother, the idol of my girlish heart!—and now I must lose her! By and by my sobs grew less, and then my mother said:—

“Do not grieve so, Marjory, my child. It may not be as bad as we think; but, whatever happens, let you and me be submissive to God’s holy will.”

“Oh, mamma!” I sobbed; “what will become of me? I have no one but you.”

“Hush, my dear? God cares for the ORPHAN, and if he intends to take me away he will provide for you. But now I will not allow you to remain here any longer; you are tired and must go to bed.”

It was in vain I begged to be allowed to sit up with her.

“No,” mamma said; “you shall rest to-night and come to me in the morning. So now, my dear, kiss me good-night, and let your ayah help you to bed, and before you go to sleep pray to Our Lady of Perpetual Succor to assist you and to gain for you the grace of resignation.”

I kissed my mother good-night, and going to bed I sobbed myself to sleep.

.

For three months I watched by my dear mother and helped to nurse her. She was in rapid consumption, and we expected the end might come any moment; and as she lay with closed eyes and the hectic flush on her cheek, and a look of perfect peace and resignation and REST on her gentle face, how I dreaded the approach of the visitor that would forever separate us in this life! Neither could I

bring myself to say, "THY WILL BE DONE"; and oh, how often, when my heart rebelled, I would go away and closing myself in my own room I would kneel before the statue of Mary Immaculate, praying for grace to bear the coming trial!

One of the bright spots in my life at that time was the receipt of a letter every week from Sister Agatha. I looked forward for the postman each Tuesday morning, and for that day, at least, my heart would be more cheerful. She would tell me all that was of interest concerning the school and pupils and would enclose devotional cards and prayers, never failing in each letter to direct my thoughts towards a religious life.

One day, whilst reading to my mother from the life of St. Francis de Sales, she desired me to lay aside the book, and taking my hand in hers, whilst I crept up more closely to her, she said:—

"MARJORY, I WANT YOU TO PROMISE ME THAT WHEN I AM DEAD YOU WILL CARRY OUT THE WISH OF MY HEART, EVEN AS IT WAS THAT OF YOUR FATHER BEFORE HE DIED."

I could not reply at first, for again my heart rebelled. Why had she to die? Why must she be taken away from me? My mother waited patiently for a few seconds, and then pressing her hand upon my head she said:—

"MY CHILD, WILL YOU NOT ANSWER ME?"

"Oh, mamma! don't, don't say anything about dying. You must not die; I will not let you."

"Hush, my darling!" she said, in a pained voice; "it

is wicked to speak thus, and you must not encourage such rebellion in your heart. Your will should be submissive to that of God. *Now dry away your tears and listen to me, for I dare not delay any longer that which lies as a burden on my heart.*"

Loving my mother as I did, I endeavoured to control my grief.

"Now, Marjory, my child," she continued, "I want you to promise me that when I die you will go to your father's friend in Ireland; you will find his cousin's address in some papers that I will give to you. My relatives are dead, with the exception of an aunt that I have in Kilkea. It has always been my desire, and was that of your father, that you should enter into a religious order, and your father's relatives will help you to carry out this wish."

"But, mamma," I said, "I don't know any of my father's people. You have never before said one word to me about this desire of his that I should embrace a religious vocation."

"No, Marjory," she replied; "nor should I now broach the subject, but that death, I feel sure, is approaching, and I promised your father on his deathbed that I would educate you with this view, and when you were old enough I should tell you of his last wish."

I sat still, not knowing what to say. Gradually I began to realize that I really knew absolutely nothing about my father, except that he had served in the army, and had ultimately died of wounds received during the mutiny, as I have already mentioned. Perhaps my mother divined

something of my thoughts, for, drawing me closer to her side, she said: "Marjory, you are, no doubt, wondering why it is that I have maintained so much silence in respect to your father. You know that I have never ceased to mourn him. All these years I have been true to his memory. I met him in Ireland when I was quite a young girl. He was first introduced to me by my brother on the occasion of a visit he made us to Dublin. At that time my brother was about to be ordained for the priesthood, and your father had almost finished his course for the same vocation."

As she said this, I looked at my mother. This was indeed a revelation to me. My mother's voice trembled as she continued.

"Shortly after this my brother was ordained, but died in two years. Your father visited our house. My mother, your grandmother, predicted that in time he would become one of the most influential servants of the Church. He was ordained; still we met, and the time came when, regardless of the fact that he was a priest, he told me of his deep affection for me.

"Come, my child; come closer to me. Let me clasp you to my heart as I tell you that which has embittered my life, brought disgrace upon yours, and has been the loss of your father's soul."

"My father's soul lost!" I cried in terror.

"YES, LOST; LOST FOR ALL ETERNITY," my mother replied, "and through me!"

For a few moments neither of us spoke. When my mother was somewhat calmer, she said:—

“We agreed to be married. I *knew* the Church would condemn us, and would not recognise the union between us, but I allowed myself to be persuaded and went through the ceremony. For some time we kept our secret. Your father, however, came to me one day and said he was going to London. He still wore his priestly garb, and I had no suspicion that there was anything unusual attached to his visit. He had made the same journey before. Two weeks passed away, when I received a letter from him, saying that in order to escape ecclesiastical censure he had left Ireland, and had entered the East India Company's service under an assumed name, and would sail for Calcutta in a few days. The letter contained a draft for £100, with a request that as soon as possible I should follow him to Fort George, Calcutta; and so, under pretence of visiting some friends for a week, I packed my box and carried out my husband's instructions. When I arrived in London I found his vessel had sailed from Liverpool. So I followed him by the first sailing-vessel. It took nearly seven months from the day of sailing to that on which we arrived at Calcutta. Your father was still at Fort George, and oh, how thankful I was once more to see him!”

Again my mother stopped speaking, and seeing how exhausted she was, I begged her not to say any more.

“No, my child,” she said; “let me finish. I may

never have another opportunity to carry out obediently the command of my confessor.

“But he was changed. My husband seemed another being. Too late had he repented of the rash step he had taken. He was at *heart* the priest, but he was the soul of honor. I had come out to India trusting him, and so he would remain just the soldier and husband. The battalion to which he belonged was ordered to Peshawur, and there your sister Agnes was born. You never knew, Marjory, that you had had a sister. She lived only three years and was the pet of the station. The same priest that baptized you, Father Mariana, also administered the same sacrament to her. Your father was obliged to go to church—military discipline demanded it; but he would not go to confession. And I, knowing that if I went I would be compelled to confess the position of your father and myself, also remained away. But, oh, what I suffered,” continued my mother shuddering, “especially when your father would be away on military duty! Then after the Scinde war was over our battalion was ordered to Lahore. Your father had been wounded at Gwalior and Mooltan. I did not see him until I joined him in this fort. Then the terrible cholera epidemic broke out, and I was glad to be of some use. Oh, how many of our soldiers died both here in the fort and in Meen Meer! Your father nursed many of his comrades. We had hardly passed through this terrible scourge when the mutiny broke out, and all

English regiments were at once ordered under arms. The women and children were all brought in from Meen Meer to the fort. The native Sepoy regiments were disarmed, and your father was once more on the battlefield. You were not born then. Oh, the awful agony endured by the women in those dreadful days. Then followed weeks and months of cruel suspense. Then came news of the awful tragedy at Cawnpore, and our hearts sickened when we realized that perhaps at any moment even the natives in the fort would revolt. But the Seikh regiments remained loyal, and the dreadful mutiny finally ended, and your father came home, wounded. You were born in 1859, and your father's heart was wrapped up in you.

“When you were about a year old I was seated on the veranda enjoying the cool evening breeze—you were out with your ayah, in your little goat-carriage, for a ride—when I saw your father coming toward the house, accompanied by Father Mariana. Oh, how my heart beat! how I dreaded the visit of the holy man! A thousand thoughts flashed through my brain at once. Had my husband confessed at last, and was the priest coming to censure me and command me also to approach the sacrament of penance? I know not what I said when at last they entered the veranda, but one look at your dear father's face reassured me. Father Mariana had heard that I could sing, and he came to secure my services for the church choir. Very

gladly I assented, and dinner hour having now arrived, I extended an invitation to the Father to dine with us. He accepted, and after dinner spent an hour in pleasant conversation. After this he visited us more frequently, and one day asked me why I had not been to confession, I made some weak reply and turned the conversation. But his question haunted me, and when I could bear it no longer I told your father about it; and oh, it was only then, after all those years, that I discovered what he had been suffering—patiently, quietly enduring what to him was HELL! for could he only have had an opportunity of undoing his great crime against the Church, without causing me to suffer, how gladly would he have availed himself of the opportunity. But he had placed an insurmountable barrier between the Church and himself.

“We sat there, both of us, with clasped hands. My husband at last drew me to him, and pressing me to his heart, said:—

““Helen, we have both sinned; I, however, am the guiltier of the two. I was a priest; I had dedicated my life to God. The hope of my boyhood had been realized, and I was looking into a future when, through a life of self-denial, I would serve God and our Holy Church. I would go amongst His poor, carrying comfort to the sorrowful, hope to the sinner, and proving myself a true follower of my crucified Lord. But I saw you, and after that it seemed that I could not endure life away from you ;

and in a moment of weakness I yielded to temptation—I, the priest, the anointed of the Lord, who should have stood by and protected you, a member of Holy Mother Church! yet it was I who caused you to commit a deadly sin, and my punishment at times has been greater than I can bear; and as I look into the face of our little Marjory, and see my features stamped there, I dread lest she, too, should inherit my sin.'

"I knelt down by his side—he who had been so loyal, so true. I said the only thing I believed would bring him consolation:—

" 'There is the sacrament of penance.'

" 'Hush, Helen!' he said. 'You know that from the day I took off my cassock to wear the soldier's uniform I have never once approached the sacraments of the Church. There is only one way by which my soul can be freed from sin and thus escape the punishment of hell!'

" 'Oh!' I cried; 'why not accept it?'

" 'Your father drew me to him, and taking my face in his hands and thus looking into my eyes as if he would read the inmost depths of my heart, said:—

" 'Helen, do you know under what conditions ALONE I could approach the sacrament of penance?'

" 'Of course I do,' I replied. 'Is it not with a hearty contrition for sin and a full and sincere confession?'

" 'YES, HELEN; but there is another condition. Should I go to Father Mariana and desire absolution, I could only

receive it on condition that I left you and retired into a monastery.'

"My heart sank at his words; a mist swam before my eyes, and with a groan I lay at his feet. He raised me up and gathering me to his arms, said :—

" 'Rest in peace, Helen; the sacrifice will not be required from you.'

"But oh, Marjory, my child! as I looked into his face I read there the agony he was undergoing, and if at that moment the sacrifice of my life could have restored him once more to the bosom of the Church I would willingly have yielded it up.

"For some weeks after this conversation I did not go to church, and the good priest had to get some one else to sing for him; but at the end of that time I had made up my mind that if by giving up your father it would be the means of his salvation I should no longer be the obstacle.

"Filled, therefore, with this resolve, I one morning called upon Father Mariana and told him I wished to prepare for a general confession. He was pleased to hear this, and assured me he had prayed earnestly to our Blessed Lady to gain for me the grace of a good confession; and the good Father, fearing that perhaps if I deferred too long I would yield to temptation and not have courage to make a second attempt, decided that next day I should come to church to make my examination of conscience in the morning, and then make my confession in the afternoon. I went home, and oh, my child! I never returned, and so the opportunity was lost.

"Your father died three years afterwards; but the few months preceeding his death he frequently entered the church and remained there for hours; and on his death-bed he made me promise that I would have you educated to enter a religious life. His reason was that in consequence of your remarkable resemblance to him—not only in features, but apparently, at that early age, in disposition—you might some day be tempted beyond your strength, and your only safety, he believed, lay in a religious vocation; and oh, Marjory! you will not disappoint us?"

"It is now eleven years since your father died. After his death, and before he was buried, I went to Father Mariana and made my confession; but it was *too late*! Your father died without the sacraments of the Church, and could not be buried in consecrated ground; so his body lies in the Protestant Cemetery in Meen Meer, and his soul? oh, my God!" my mother cried out, in a voice full of anguish, "have mercy upon his soul!"

She lay there now thoroughly exhausted. She had worked herself into an hysterical condition, and fearing the result I soothed her as best I could, sending for the doctor, who administered an opiate; and when she was quietly resting under its effect I stole away to my room, and bolting myself in I tried to think of all I had heard. Oh, how my heart bled for my mother! The mystery now of all her reserve and secret sorrow was explained. It was not for me to add one moment's grief to a life that had for so many years been under the cloud of sorrow.

I knelt once more before the statue of Our Lady, and with tears begged her to protect me. I was a devout, earnest Catholic in those days, and had deep love and reverence for the Virgin Mary as the Mater Dolorosa, or the Mother of Sorrows, and in this dark hour I fled to her. She was just as much a living reality to me as my mother, but oh, with what holy reverence would I approach her! Had I not been taught from early childhood to look upon her as my mother? And *now* she would help and comfort me. I was only a girl. I knew nothing of the world, or its ways, but as a Catholic I knew that, in the eyes of the Church, my parents had sinned grievously.

But a new spirit seemed to enter into my being that day. I tried to think of how my father must have looked, and oh, how grieved I was that he had been taken away before I could have remembeed him! And somehow that day a deeper love for my father's memory took possession of me, and then I endured untold agony at the thought that his soul was suffering at that moment all the pangs of the lost in hell. He could have saved his soul by giving up my mother, but he preferred to be true to his manhood. My mother did not live long after this, and the morning preceeding the night of her death she called me to her and said:—

“Marjory, dear, will you carry out your father's wishes?”

“Yes, mamma,” I replied.

“And you, my child, you do not despise me?”

"No, mamma, dear; I love you more tenderly than ever, and will cherish my father's memory. And now," I continued, "will you not tell me his right name? You say the one he was known by, and which I now bear, was assumed."

"Yes, Marjory," replied my mother, "but you must promise me here that under *no* circumstances will you allow it to pass your lips. I have guarded it sacredly all these years. Remember that our Church does not acknowledge the marriage between your father and me, and though there is property he owns in Ireland, yet as a Catholic you could not lay any claim to it. Oh," she cried, "I do not know why I am so troubled about your future! I know God and our Blessed Lady will care for you, but whenever I try to look into the years that will come, when I shall no longer be near you, a dark foreboding fills my soul. 'THE SINS OF THE FATHER SHALL BE VISITED UPON THE CHILDREN.' Oh, my child, how often I have heard your father repeat these words when speaking of you! But you will promise me that, whatever may come, you will be true to your father's memory, and that his name will never be known!"

"Rest assured, mamma," I said. "I promise you here that even at the expense of life and reputation I will never allow my father's identity to pass my lips. See, here is your crucifix," I continued, taking it out of her hands; "and on the holy emblem of my Saviour's sufferings and man's salvation I seal the vow I take." I pressed my lips

to the crucifix and placed it back in her hands.

My mother then drew my head down and whispered the name in my ear, and though I have repeated it over and over again in my heart, yet it has never escaped my lips. There are some of my father's relations who know me; yes, some in these United States—two of them are priests—but they will never breathe his name.

That night the end came; my mother seemed better in the afternoon and more peaceful, and as evening came on I retired to my own room to rest, leaving her in care of the European nurse, as well as her own ayah. It was towards midnight when the former came and aroused me, saying a great change had taken place. So, hurriedly slipping on a muslin robe, I went to my mother. She lay there gasping for breath.

“Mamma! oh, mamma!” I cried, kneeling down and taking her hand. “Do you not know me?”

Now that the end had come; now that a few moments intervened between her soul and eternity, I wanted her, before she ever closed her eyes upon this life, to look once more into my face—only once more to hear the beloved voice. After a moment she no longer gasped, but lay quiet. Again I whispered—

“Mamma! speak to me—only one word.”

She opened her eyes, now becoming dimmed. Her hand feebly pressed mine, and as I stooped nearer she said:—

“God bless you, my child!”

I held the crucifix to her lips, and as the gray shadow

crept over her face once more her lips moved. I stooped lower to catch the faint sound. "Father! name!" I heard, and then with the holy names of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph on her lips her spirit passed away into the realms of eternity, and I was alone in the world.

.

Sleep on, mother dearest, best of all earthly friends! Sleep on now and take your rest! You have passed away from life's cares and sorrows. Sleep on; I see you now, as I saw you last, lying on your death couch so calm, so pure, so beautiful, and in your hands you hold the crucifix that had, during the latter years of your life, been your constant companion, whilst around your fingers are entwined the rosary beads on which you had repeated so many earnest prayers. Your sighing is over, your tears are wiped away by the loving hand of Him who died for you. I shall never, in this life, behold you again; your sweet voice will never be heard by me; your hand will never press mine with tender mother-love, but you live in my memory; you are ever present with me, your face is indelibly impressed upon my mind, and even though I may live to grow old and my hair become whitened, my recollections of you will never fade. You and I loved each other; we were bound by a link that few could understand. I wonder, dear one, if you are watching me to-night as I sit in my room writing. Perhaps you do, for whenever I think of you, when your sweet face comes before me, I seem to be surrounded by an atmosphere of quiet, peace, and rest, and I long, with an

unutterable longing, to be back once more in the old home, to have the old feeling of perfect rest, to kneel once more by your side, for oh, mother, life has been so dark, so dreary, with very little of joy, and to-day the cloud rests heavy, but I have kept my word, kept it through the times of deepest temptation, and it will die with me. Our meeting is not very far off, and when the time comes and Jesus calls me home, you and I and my father will be reunited for eternity, and together we will praise Him in the city that has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for He, the Lamb, is the light of it; together we shall walk the jasper floor, together sing the song of salvation, and join in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

CHAPTER III.

“ACROSS THE OCEAN.”

THREE months passed away; three months since I had gazed for the last time on the dead face of my mother as she lay calm and at rest in her coffin; three months since I realized that the voice was hushed forever, and that I stood in the world alone—fatherless, motherless, with a weight that burdened my heart and made me almost shrink from contact with those of the world. Oh, how I dwelt on every detail connected with the life of my father! and awe came over me when, as a Catholic, I realized that he had

been a priest—the anointed of the Lord; and then a hero-worship for him sprung up in my heart. I did not shrink when I thought of how he had given up every hope, every ambition, that he might be true to his manhood, and thus shield and protect her who had been his temptress. I thought only of the self-denial of months and years, and, though I had no personal recollections of him, though his face could never impress itself on memory's page, yet somehow it seemed to me that a link bound our souls together—a something I could not understand—an influence which even *now* I cannot define, except that I am conscious of its existence, and that it is a bond of sympathy between the dead and the living; and there have been times innumerable when, thinking of him and my mother, I seem to be under some peculiar influence, an influence associated, as it would naturally be, with my girlhood days and religious belief; and many times have I closed myself in from the world for a few hours, so as to enable me to grieve alone, when no eye but God's could witness my tears or ear other than His hear the words that fell from my lips.

But the time at last arrived for my final departure from my dear old home. Ah, how well I remember every incident connected with the last day and night! Many of the native merchants with whom we had dealt for years came to see me, and each brought with him a present. How many of those shrewd Hindoo merchants had come to my mother during her lifetime for advice, and it was a com-

mon sight to see the veranda lined with natives awaiting to present their case before her and then be guided by her. My own faithful nurse, Jhindea, was at my feet; Ramdhunnie (our bearer), Toolsie and Peer Buskh (our kitmudgars), Ali Buskh (the Khansamna), together with my own favorite sycee (or groom), the Bheestu (water-carrier), Dhursie (tailor), Dhobey (laundryman), Boorchee (cook), and many other less important indoor and outdoor servants were around me and seemed inconsolable.

“Missee Baba,” said Ali Bushk, the Khansamna, “Ap beliath ko Jantha hai, liken ap ke nokur ap ko kubbee nihi bhoolinga. Ap hur vukuth chitti lieko ap ke nokur ko?”

The English translation of this is :—

“Missee Baba, you are going to England, but your servants will never forget you, and from time to time will you write to your servants?”

Slowly and solemnly they made the salaam to me, laying a basket of fruit and sweet spices and sweetmeats at my feet. My dear old ayah, who was going with me to Bombay, came and clasped my feet, and cried, “Oh, mera bucha, mera bucha, mihi ap ko khisa jana daga?” (Oh, my pet, my little one, how can I let you go?) And there she lay sobbing. It was no wonder that she should feel the separation, for she had wet-nursed me and had not been separated from me for even one day, having been allowed to remain with me in school, and I never knew how much she had endeared herself to me until I realized that I was to lose her. Then there was Ali Bushk, our Khansamna.

He had grown old in our service. He had travelled with my parents from Fort George, Calcutta, and had been faithful and loyal to the family, and cared for my mother during the terrible mutiny, and the tears fell down his cheeks as he came to make his final salaam.

It was a lovely night, that last one in my old home. The moon never seemed to have shone more brightly before. I stood outside, gazing on it—drinking in the beauty and brightness of its rays as they fell across the pathway. I could not go indoors immediately, not being able to sleep, but by and by entered my oratory, and, kneeling down before the statue of our Lady of Dolours, I began repeating the five sorrowful mysteries of the rosary. Oh, how I loved my religion in those days! Its every teaching was sacred to me, and *no words* can define to my reader the feeling of reverential love I had for the Virgin Mary. To one who has never been a Catholic this love for the Mother of Jesus on the part of Catholics must always remain a mystery. Neither do I think it possible for one who has turned from Protestantism to Catholicism to have it in the same measure or sense as one born of Catholic ancestors; and so the intense veneration I had for the Blessed Virgin I believe to have been a hereditary one. And as I knelt, an humble suppliant before her statue, I thought of her as the tender, compassionate mother of Jesus, the friend and mediatrix of sinners. The thought of praying to Christ for any special grace without seeking the intercession of Mary never occurred to me. In times of trouble and per-

plexity my first thoughts would be to seek her protection and propitiation, believing that my petition would the more readily be granted. And so that night I prayed earnestly to her to obtain for me the grace to bear in quiet resignation the sorrow of my great loss. I arose from my knees feeling more peaceful, and sought my own room. I lay down on my bed, and, with my dead mother's crucifix in my hands, I sobbed myself to sleep.

The next morning, accompanied by my ayah, I took the train from the railway station, which was about two miles from Fort Lahore, and was soon speeding on my way to Bombay, arriving in that city the fourth day. My passage had been secured on the P. & O. steamer. My ayah went on board with me and did all in her power to arrange matters comfortably for the voyage. I had a good stateroom. Oh, how nervous, how lonely I felt! And when the last moment came and the bell rang, warning all who were not passengers to leave the steamer, how I clung to my faithful ayah, and sobbed out my grief! Kind hands unloosed my arms from her neck, and the stewardess, putting her arm around me, almost carried me down to my stateroom, and there everything seemed to swim before me, and I remembered no more.

.

When I awoke to consciousness I could hear the "thump, thump" of the engine, the sound of hurrying footsteps, the splashing of water. I could not recall at first where I was, but gradually I remembered, and then lay

quietly in my berth. Soon a woman's face was bendign over me, and seeing that I was awake, the stewardess (for it was she) asked me if I would take some refreshment. I asked for a cup of tea, which, when she brought it, I eagerly drank down. After that I was very sick for more than a week, and would not be persuaded to go upon deck. But one morning I was sitting in the music saloon, and looking, no doubt (as I felt), very forlorn, when the Captain came and sat by my side and tried to engage me in conversation. I must have looked a strange girl. My hair was very long and thick, and fell past my waist in natural curls. I was dressed in deep mourning, my face was pale from seasickness and confinement, and my eyes inflamed through constant crying. Little by little the Captain prevailed upon me to go up to the deck, and finally one morning he carried me in his arms up the stairs, and finding me a cosy easy chair he placed me in it. Then, sitting by my side on a camp-stool, he talked to me about the many voyages he had made. After this I went up daily, and often asked the Captain to take me on the bridge with him, which he never refused. But I did not make friends with many of the passengers.

There was one little corner of the deck that I had to myself, and every evening after dinner found me sitting there, and somehow passengers and sailors all seemed to respect my desire to remain undisturbed. So I would steal to my little corner, and sitting down would repeat my rosary, and even sing quietly in a low voice the hymn to Mary, "Star of the Sea."

The second mate on the steamer also took an interest in me. And I remember one evening I was sitting in my accustomed place on the deck, looking out upon the moon-lit sea. I forgot for the moment where I was, and once more in memory I was in the old home leaning over my mother. Suddenly my eyes fell upon my black dress, and with great anguish in my lonely heart I cried out, "Oh, mamma, mamma, come back!" and bowing down my head on my hands I sobbed 'out in my grief. A hand was laid upon my shoulder, and a sympathising, honest face met my gaze as I looked up. It was that of the second mate.

"Don't cry, miss, like that," he said; "crying won't bring her back."

No; crying would not bring her back. I could go to her, but she could never come back to me. So after that I became more reconciled, and as the days passed by I overcame myself sufficiently to be more sociable. On the whole, the voyage was a pleasant one, and when the vessel at last entered the dock at Southampton it was with feelings of regret I said good-bye to the kind captain and mate, and the many who had tried to make my sorrow lighter by words and actions of loving sympathy.

CHAPTER IV.

MY FATHER'S SIN.

"The sins of the father shall be visited upon the children."

LOOKING back to-night through the years that have passed since the day I first stepped upon England's shores a motherless, fatherless girl, with no experimental knowledge of the world and its people, and as scene after scene of all that has taken place in my life since then comes before me, I ask myself if I am indeed the same individual, for at that time, though full of sorrow in consequence of my mother's death and the position of my father, yet life had many charms for me, and I looked forward to enjoyment. My father's relations, some living in Dublin, others in the County Clare, Ireland, did not receive me as cordially as I expected. They seemed to shrink away from me. And my very father's cousin, James, with whom I had my home for nearly two years, called me one morning into his study, and, after handing me a chair and seating himself by his desk, where for a minute or so he fidgeted in a nervous manner, said to me:—

"Cousin, have you any personal recollection of your father?"

"No," I replied; "he died, as you are aware, when I was only four years old."

"Then," he continued, "you know nothing of your

father's career before he went to India?"

I felt glad that my cousin, whilst addressing this question to me, had his head bent down, for I felt the blood rush to my face. But, quickly recovering myself, I said:—

"I suppose there was nothing in my father's life, cousin James, that you or I, or any one, need be ashamed of?"

Again he fidgeted with the arm of his chair, and then commenced nervously sorting some papers on his table. I waited patiently, having an idea to what he alluded.

At last he turned to me and said:—

"Marjory, did your mother, previously to her death, tell you how and under what circumstances she met your father?"

"Yes," I replied; "she told me everything, cousin James," and I looked him calmly in the face.

"Everything?" he said.

"Yes," I continued; "everything."

My cousin's face flushed. He rose to his feet, pushed aside his chair, and, standing before me, said in a voice of suppressed emotion:—

"Then you know your father was"—he hesitated.

Rising from my chair I stood before him. I felt the blood receding from my face as I said:—

"I know my father was an ordained priest."

My cousin looked at me in a dazed manner. At last, recovering himself by a great effort, he said, whilst motioning me to be seated, and taking his own chair again:—

"If you know this, Marjory, then you are aware that

your father and mother lived a long life of sin; that the marriage ceremony between them was of no account; and that to-day you are"—

But I would not allow him to finish, and quickly said:—

"The child of a priest and his wife."

My words caused an outburst of passion from my cousin.

"His wife?" he cried, in a voice full of passion. "His wife?" She was no wife. She was sent by Satan to tempt him. She lured him on as an angel of light. She it was who caused him to be false to his vows as the Lord's anointed—he who was so full of promise, who would have been a devoted servant of Holy Mother Church; he on whom we had spent so many anxious thoughts, whose whole ambition was to serve the Church—his life was blighted, and your mother was the cause, and through her he was lost body and soul. Oh, how I cursed her living, and now I curse her dead, the"—

"Silence!" I cried out, as, choking with indignation at the insult offered to the memory of my mother, I stood up before him, and in my passion could have struck him. "You have said enough. Whatever of wrong was committed it was by both. You SHALL NOT, in my presence, insult the memory of her who was one of the purest and best of women. My father loved and revered her. I honor him for the position he maintained towards her, and always shall. Let the Church do what she likes; she cannot keep me from loving his memory. Oh!" I cried, "if only he were alive, you would not dare to say what you have."

And then, completely unnerved, I burst out crying.

My cousin sat in silence until my sobs grew fainter, and then said to me: "You do not seem to realize the awful guilt of your parents. You say, let the Church do what she likes. Are you aware that, though you are your father's child, and a marriage ceremony really took place between him and your mother, yet you are not entitled to ANYTHING he may have left? The Church does not recognize the marriage, and you, as a Catholic, must submit to its decision."

"Cousin James," I answered, "I have been too carefully instructed in my religion not to realize all you say as to the enormity of the sin committed by my parents against the Church. And," I continued, "as far as any property is concerned, borrow no trouble. When my mother confided to me the particulars of her position it was under the solemn vow that under NO CONSIDERATION would I ever breathe his true name to any one. Even here in your house," I said, looking up into his face, "I bear the name he assumed, and only to the immediate members of the family is my REAL identity known. But," I continued, "if you want me to respect you, you must never again speak of my mother as you have done to-night. Had *you* known her as I did, and witnessed her suffering and anguish in the after-years of her life for the very step she had taken when young and tempted, you would have no resentment, but only pity for her."

A look of relief passed over my cousin's face. "Well,

Marjory," he said, "I am glad to find that you have a reverence for our holy religion, and that you will help to keep secret the scandal brought upon it by your parents."

"Yes," I replied, now stung by his selfishness, "and *I* am glad that from MY FATHER I inherit a sense of honor and self-denial where our religion is concerned that would make me prefer martyrdom before mentioning his name."

Saying which, I rose from my seat, intending to leave the room, but as I approached the door my cousin called me back.

"Marjory," he said, "I do not want you to have any hard feeling against me, but your coming here has made it very unpleasant in many ways. You cannot control people's thoughts, and there are some old inhabitants here who remember your father and know of his acquaintance with your mother, and " (he continued, growing more nervous) "you bear such a striking likeness to your father, in features, voice, and manner—and this morning I find you have much of his disposition—that some have guessed who you are, and we think it better that you should not remain here longer; but" (with a look of utter helplessness) "I don't know what to do with you."

This was so unexpected that for a moment I could not reply, but summoning to my assistance all my pride and self-control I said:—

"So you want me to leave your home, to free you from the presence of one who, in consequence of her 'STRIKING-LIKENESS,' reminds you of the sin committed in bygone

years by those who are now dead, and you say, 'You don't know what to do with me.' Never mind, cousin James," I went on. "If you don't know what to do with me, I know what to do with myself, and I will not inflict my presence on you and your family much longer."

"And what do you intend doing?" he asked. "You seem to be helplessly ignorant of the ways of the world. You cannot work, except at the needle, and, unfortunately for you, Marjory, you are very good-looking."

"Thank you," I answered. "So I owe my father another obligation—I am good-looking. I have his voice, his manner, and you say you have discovered this morning that I also inherit much of his disposition. Well, he, as a priest, fascinated his patient, and I might, following in his footsteps, fascinate some confessor. We are told," I continued, hardly conscious of what I was saying, "'That the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children,'" and I laughed aloud in my mad rage. Prophetic words, spoken in a moment of madness, but they came back to me in the after-years; they pierced my soul with bitterness, and I would have given my life to be able to recall them.

The effect of my words was terrible on my cousin.

"Silence!" he cried, raising his hand as if to strike me. "SILENCE! *offspring* OF SIN AND SHAME, of her who robbed the CHURCH of *him* who *might* have been one of its *brightest* ornaments. Oh! already you show traces of causing untold scandal. Are you not afraid that God's wrath will fall upon you?"

But I was now maddened beyond control.

"Oh!" I cried, "*I hate you! I hate you!* and I don't care what I do. If my father's *soul is lost*, then I will spend my eternity *with him in hell*. I never wish to see your face again;" and rushing from the room I slammed to the door, and going to my own I locked the door, and throwing myself upon the floor I sobbed out my anger and grief.

.

Evening shadows gather; my sobshave ceased; I rise up from the floor and sit down by the open window of my bedroom. I hear footsteps on the gravel path, and, looking down, I recognise my cousin and Father Daly; they are walking to and fro, evidently engaged in deep conversation. Somehow I know they are talking of me; I cannot hear a word they say, but I feel it. Half an hour passes by and they both come into the house, and in a few minutes I hear a knock at my door.

"Who is there?" I asked, going to the door, but without opening it.

"If you please, Miss," answered the voice of Ellen, the parlor-maid, "Father Daly would like to see you in the parlor."

"Well, Ellen," I replied, still keeping the door locked, "give my compliments to Father Daly, and ask him to excuse me; I have a headache and cannot see anyone."

She turned from the door, and I heard her descending the stairs. I went to my seat by the window, and in a

short time I saw Father Daly leave the house. The sight of the priest, as he passed down the garden-path and out of the gate, had a softening influence over me, and as I thought of the scene between my cousin and myself I trembled with superstitious fear. Oh, how I repented my rash, mad words! My better nature asserted itself, and, after bathing my face, I unlocked my door and descended the stairs. I paused at the door of my cousin's study. I knocked, and soon heard him say "Come in." My hand trembled as I turned the knob, but, overcoming myself, I entered. My cousin was at his desk with his back towards the door, and did not turn, thinking probably it was the servant. I went up to him, and standing by his side, said:—

"Cousin James, I have come to ask your forgiveness."

He wheeled his chair around, and seeing me standing there, said:—

"I thought you were too much indisposed to see Father Daly, and now you come down after he has gone away."

"I was too unwell," I said, "to see him; but I feel I did wrong in speaking to you as I did, and so I have come to apologise."

My cousin looked at me for a moment and said:—

"I accept your apology, but it does not alter my decision as to the necessity of your removal from this house. If you are sorry, as you claim, prove it by going to see Father Daly to-morrow morning, and allow yourself to be guided by him in your future course. Good-night." And

turning round again to his table, he commenced writing, thus giving me to understand that I was dismissed. By an almost superhuman effort I overcame the desire to answer him, and quickly walked out of the study.

CHAPTER V.

THE POWER OF THE PRIEST.

WHEN I awoke it was day. My sleep had in no way refreshed me. On the contrary, my head ached and throbbed ; my throat was dry. I had taken a severe cold. The rain was pouring down and in through the open window. I felt really ill, but endeavored to rise, and taking off my clothes I crept into bed. I must have lain there an hour, or perhaps more, when a knock came to the door. I arose, and unlocking it admitted my cousin's wife.

"What is the matter with you, Marjory," she asked. "I sent Ellen up to see if you were coming down to breakfast ; but she could not succeed in making you hear, and I concluded you had gone out to early mass. But," she continued, "what is the matter with you ? You look quite white and are shivering with cold."

"I think I must have taken cold," I replied, making an effort to go back to bed.

"I don't think anything about it," answered my cousin;

"I am quite sure you have. Now come straight back to bed, and let me bring you up some tea; there," she said, as she shook up the pillows, "lie down there."

I was only too glad to do as she requested, and closed my eyes to keep back my tears. I heard my cousin Elizabeth leave the room, but she returned in a very few minutes.

"Come now, Marjory," she said, "try to drink this tea. It will do you good." She raised my head, and placing the cup to my lips, stood there until I drank the tea, and after sponging my face and hands and bathing my head with eau de cologne, she said:—

"You feel better now, Marjory?"

"Yes, cousin Elizabeth," I replied; and taking hold of her hand, I said:—

"Where is cousin James?"

"He has gone over to Father Daly's," she answered.

"Then you know what has occurred?" I asked, opening my eyes and looking at her.

My cousin pressed my hand as she replied:—

"Yes, James has told me something. But oh, Marjory, my dear, why did you anger him so? What made you say such terrible things? James has not slept all night, and early this morning he went to Father Daly's after warning me not to allow any one to enter your room, but to bring you your meals and to keep you in here until his return."

"And when do you expect him back?" I asked.

"Any moment," replied my cousin; "but I will not allow you to talk any more; so close your eyes and try to sleep; it will do you good;" and she whispered, "It will all come right, I am sure, after James and you have had another interview. And I will come up again by and by." After kissing me and once more bathing my forehead she went softly out, closing the door after her.

All that day I remained in bed with my head throbbing. My cousin Elizabeth came in several times, and towards five o'clock, feeling better, I arose and dressed myself, and sitting down in a large easy-chair tried to recall the scene of the night before. The blood rushed to my face as I thought of the insult offered to the memory of my mother and resented it; but the superstitious fear I had inherited caused me to shudder when I remembered the mad words I had used whilst defending her. I felt the injustice of making me suffer for the wrongdoing of my parents, so I said to myself:—

"They make me virtually a prisoner here. Well, I will wait and hear what cousin James has to say; but one thing is certain, I *will not* remain here."

Evening came on. I did not care to light the gas. The rain had ceased, and the moonbeams shone through the open window. It was nine o'clock when I heard a carriage drive up to the door, and not very long afterwards my cousin's wife came up and asked me if I would go down to the study to see her husband.

"No, I replied; "he has kept me a prisoner here, if he

wants to speak to me, let him come up here. I shall *not* go down."

She tried to persuade me, but without success, and at last turned away and went down stairs.

A few minutes more and she returned.

"Marjory," she said, "here is a note for you."

I took it from her hand, and, opening it, read:—

"My child, will you come down to the study? I desire to speak with you."

This written request bore the signature of Father Daly. The temptation to send an excuse was very strong, but I put it aside, and told my cousin to go down and say I would be with him as soon as possible. After she had left the room I sat for a moment trying to compose myself. Oh, how I dreaded going into the presence of the priest! I knew not what to expect. However, summoning up my courage I went down stairs. Father Daly and cousin James were both there. The latter handed me a chair, and I sat down. No word was spoken for a few seconds. The silence became oppressive. At last my cousin said:—

"Marjory, in consequence of your exhibition of temper and the sacrilegious language used by you last evening, I deemed it my duty to lay the whole case before Father Daly, who, as your confessor, is more able to deal with you. And he has come to-night especially to speak with you. So," he continued, rising from his chair, "*I will leave you with him.*"

My cousin passed out of the study, leaving me alone with

the priest. I sat still, with my eyes downcast. The anger had all died out of my heart, and the old superstitious love and reverence of the priesthood took its place. I forgot, for the time being, everything but one fact. *I was a ROMAN CATHOLIC.* Oh, you who have never been under this influence, who have from childhood been allowed freedom of speech, liberty of conscience, and to see no distinction between clergy and laity ! You cannot, you never will understand the influence that the Irish Roman Catholic priests have over the laity of their own nationality. French and Italian Catholics will not hesitate to criticise and even openly rebel against their priests, but among the Irish such instances are very, very, rare. Dear to the heart of the Irish Catholic is the term “SOGARTH AROON,” and gladly will they deny themselves very often the necessities of life to give towards the support of their Church, whilst closing their eyes and ears to the failings of their priests.

For some moments not a word was spoken. Then Father Daly, drawing his chair up close to mine, said :—

“My child, you have grieved me very much.” I neither replied nor raised my head. “Do you know,” he continued, in a voice full of sympathy, “that it is wrong for you to indulge in such outbursts of temper and to speak as you did last evening to your cousin ? Of what use to you are the sacraments of our Holy Church, if they do not help you to overcome these natural tendencies to sin ?”

“Oh, Father,” I said, bursting into sobs, “I am sorry ;

but when he said what he did about my mother I could not help replying."

"Well, my child, "I do not doubt that you had some provocation, yet at the same time you should not forget that by the sin of your parents your cousin is placed in a very embarrassing position. Remember, your father and he were boys together. Your cousin is a zealous and devoted Catholic, and had entertained great hopes for your father's usefulness, and your presence cannot fail to remind him of your father's sad fall, and through it the loss sustained by our Holy Mother Church."

"Oh, father Daly," I replied, "am I ever to be reminded of the mistake made before my birth by my parents? Am I to go on living year after year, constantly obliged to have this brought up before me? If," I continued, "this is to be my lot, then I wish I could die, for I would be no trouble to any one."

"Sin must be punished," said Father Daly, "and there is a way by which you can make reparation to God for that of your parents."

"How can I make reparation?" I asked.

"By entering one of the religious orders," answered the priest, "and thus devoting your life to acts of self-denial and also placing yourself in a safe retreat."

"Yes," I replied, "I know this way is open to me; and Father," I continued, "I did promise my mother just before her death I should do so, and when I made the promise I FULLY intended keeping it."

“Well, my child,” answered Father Daly, “you can keep your promise. There is nothing to prevent you.”

“I know that, Father; but oh, I have no desire for such a life. I do not care to enter any religious order. I want to be FREE.”

“Free! You poor child, you do not realize what you ask,” said the priest. “You are not able to judge for yourself. But I will not say any more to you this evening. I shall be in the church to-morrow afternoon at two o’clock. and will expect you to come and make your confession, To-night seek the prayers and protection of our Blessed Lady, and remember that your immortal soul is in danger if you should fail in your obedience to become submissive to the will of God concerning your future.”

“Oh, Father,” I cried, “do not ask me to go into a religious order. It is repugnant to me. I know that I should not speak to you thus,” I continued; “but oh, my life has been a sad one since my mother died, and I cannot reconcile myself to spending the remainder of it in a convent.”

“But you promised your mother you would.”

“Yes,” I replied, “I did without realizing just what such a life meant. But you can, if you wish it, dispense me from this promise.”

“Come to the church to-morrow,” said the priest, “and in the confessional I will advise you as YOUR CONFESSOR. So now good-bye, child.”

It was no use discussing the question any longer; so,

kneeling down to receive his blessing, I turned away and with burdened heart I entered my room, and it was not until the clock struck two that I retired to rest.

CHAPTER VI.

FATHER EGAN.

THE next afternoon found me at the appointed hour kneeling before the altar rails of the church preparing for confession. In those days, before I had any thought of leaving the faith of my fathers, when every dogma, every tradition, every hymn and aspiration was dear to me. In those days confession was sacred, and this afternoon, humble and penitent, I made up my mind to try to do as my confessor had advised the previous evening; and it was in this spirit that I made my confession. And there, closed within the hush of the confessional, I was able to tell the priest the conversation between my cousin and myself, and then the struggle I underwent before I could make up my mind to go down to the study and apologise to him. I told him of the love I had for the memory of my father and mother, and the promise I had made the latter to enter some religious order, of my honest intention at that time to carry out my promise, but of my disinclination now to leave the world. The Father listened with patience until I had finished, and then said, softly:—

“Poor child! poor child!”

Only two words; but they broke the floodgates, and laying my head down upon the *priedieu* at which I knelt, I sobbed out all my grief. Father Daly spoke to me kindly and soothingly; he pointed out all the advantages I would gain spiritually by entering a religious life, and said that my disinclination to carry out the promise made to my mother was evidently a temptation from Satan. He cautioned me to be careful and on my guard lest I allowed myself to be lured away from the path that was the one chosen by God for me, saying to me, "Your immortal soul is of more importance to you than the pleasures of a vain, delusive world."

"Oh, Father!" I said, through my sobs, "is there no other prospect for me but a life of seclusion? I know it is wrong for me to speak thus to you at this holy tribunal, but my heart refuses to entertain the willingness to say yes."

"It may seem hard to you at this moment, my child," replied the priest; "and the greater the sacrifice you make the more acceptable will it be to our God. Think of the saints of our Holy Church who passed through such mortification in order that they might work out their soul's salvation, and with what joy they hailed each occasion to prove their love for their divine Master. Seek as they did the aid of our Blessed Lady and the help of the sacraments. There is no necessity for you to take this step that I advise immediately; three months hence will do, and in the meantime come often to confession and partake of the holy

eucharist every Friday morning ; and for your penance you will say each day at 12 o'clock, for two weeks, the Litany of the Sacred Heart, and at 3 o'clock you will read two chapters from the Life of St. Catherine, of Sienna, and meditate upon them for half-an-hour, and in the evening before retiring to bed you will repeat the five Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary ; and now make your Act of Contrition and receive absolution."

After leaving the confessional I remained in the church making my thanksgiving. I honestly tried to reconcile myself to the future my confessor had laid out for me, but the more I did the more repulsive it became to me. Then, as a conscientious Catholic, I endeavored to battle with what I believed to be a strong temptation of the Devil, and kneeling there before the altar of our Lady of Perpetual Succor, I besought her help and promised to keep lighted at her shrine two candles every day for one month. The shadows of evening were gathering as I arose and left the church. I walked home slowly. As I approached the garden gate leading up to the house I saw my cousin James standing by it talking with two gentlemen, and not caring to meet strangers I turned back to the side entrance that led into the kitchen garden, and so passed into the house and reached my room unobserved.

Later that evening I entered the family sitting-room. My cousin James and his wife were both there ; the former reading his paper, the latter employed in some fancy work. Both looked up and gave me a smile of welcome, and taking

my seat near Elizabeth I drew out my workbag and commenced knitting.

"I hope your headache is entirely gone, Marjory?" said my cousin's wife.

"Thank you, cousin," I replied. "It is very much better, and I am much indebted to your nursing."

Just at this moment Ellen, the parlor-maid, entered with the tea-tray, and Elizabeth, laying aside her work, commenced pouring out the tea. My cousin James laid down his paper, and, accepting the cup I handed to him, remarked that the next day we would have a visitor who would remain for a few weeks.

"A visitor?" exclaimed his wife. "Why, James, who is it, and why did you not mention it before?"

"Simply, my dear," he replied, "from the fact that until a few hours ago I was not aware of it myself. However, Elizabeth," he continued, "our guest will not give you very much trouble. He is a young priest who has just been ordained for foreign mission service, and expects to leave for abroad very soon in company with some more priests and nuns. Being, however, a friend of Father Daly's, he thought he would like to come and spend a couple of weeks with him before leaving; but, unfortunately, the good Father is unable to accommodate him in consequence of having to entertain the two priests who have already arrived to conduct the two weeks' mission that will commence on Sunday. Under these circumstances he came to me, and I

gladly offered him the use of our guest-chamber and home for his young friend."

"Of course, James, we will be only too pleased to have him and do all in our power to make his stay pleasant. What is his name?"

"Father Michael Egan," answered her husband. "He will be here some time in the afternoon. Father Daly will bring him over here and will remain to dinner, and in the evening the Mission Fathers will join us."

The announcement of an intended guest for two weeks' duration was a relief to me, for I felt that my cousin James and I would not have much opportunity for conversation, and I dreaded the introduction of my future as laid out for me; for I knew both he and Father Daly had consulted together on the subject and were agreed. It was also a source of gladness to know about the mission, for I now would be able to consult the Fathers and have the benefit of their advice. Though I was aware that ecclesiastical courtesy would not permit any priest to encourage a penitent against the advice given by her regular confessor, yet it would not be any harm to speak on the subject during the mission.

I might mention here, for the benefit of those of my readers who do not understand just what is meant by a mission, that it takes the place in the Catholic Church of a revival in the Protestant. It is usual, when the parishioners become careless and fail in their religious duties, to call in the aid of priests specially fitted for reviving religious

fervour in the hearts of Catholics by preaching a course of from three to four sermons daily, listening to confessions, and stirring up men and women spiritually. At such times as these, much financial benefit is accrued from the sale of scapulars, rosaries, little statues of the Virgin Mary and other saints, together with crucifixes and medals. In these United States, where the Roman Catholic hierarchy takes so great an interest in politics, it very often happens that, in large cities especially, missions are held perhaps three or four weeks before the day of election. By this method voters are influenced, and the wives and daughters are also requested to see that the voters of their household work and vote for such men as are endorsed by the Church. However, I will write more fully on the political aspect of the Church in another chapter of this work.

The next afternoon Father Daly brought his brother priest to the house. I met them at dinner. Father Egan proved to be a very brilliant scholar and conversationalist. He seemed very much in earnest in his work, and delighted at the prospect of going abroad, where he might shed the light of the gospel in darkened places. After dinner we all strolled out into the garden for half an hour, after which cousin James offered to drive Father Daly and his friend, in order that the latter might see some of the beauties of the place. They accepted the invitation, and, after they had driven away, my cousin Elizabeth entered the house to superintend the laying of the tea-table (for she never considered the servants could do anything without her), and,

as both the Mission Fathers were to take tea and spend the evening with us, she was anxious that all the table-arrangements should be perfect.

I remained in the garden for the purpose of cutting some flowers with which to decorate the tea-table and also the parlor. Having cut enough I entered the house, and, taking a large cut-glass bowl from off the sideboard in the dining-room, I arranged the flowers and placed it on the centre of the tea-table, and having filled the vases in the parlor, I returned to my own room, remaining there until the tea-bell rang.

I dressed myself in white, my favorite color in those days, and selecting a white rose with its beautiful dark-green leaves and maiden-hair fern, I fastened it in my dress.

My hair was twisted into a simple knot. I descended the stairs and entered the dining-room. The four guests were present, and I was placed between Father Egan and one of the Mission Fathers; we were a merry party. Father Egan kept up the conversation and never allowed it to flag. The Mission Fathers asked many questions relative to the families in the neighborhood; then politics were introduced, and the conversation finally turned into a political argument. I was too young at that time to have knowledge of the political history of Ireland, but I was intensely interested, and sorry when at length we arose from the tea-table and thus terminated the discussion.

My cousin Elizabeth was a brilliant musician, and when

we assembled in the drawing-room she entertained us with some choice selections.

"Do you sing, Miss Margaret?" The question was asked by Father Egan, who had crossed the room, where he had been in earnest conversation with Father Daly.

I looked up and said simply, "Yes, sometimes."

"Will you not favor us with a song?" he asked.

I hesitated; I had never sung in the presence of any one but our immediate family, and felt nervous at the thought of doing so now before strangers. Father Egan noticed my hesitation.

"I am sure you will," he said.

"Oh, but," I replied, "I know nothing but some simple ballads."

"And there can be nothing more beautiful," said the young priest. "And I know you will not refuse."

"I will do my best," I replied, rising, "and I have no doubt cousin Elizabeth will accompany me, for," I continued, looking into his face with a smile, "I am no musician myself."

We walked over to the piano, and selecting "Killarney," one of my favorite songs, I sang it. I am told even now, after *all* these years of sorrow and suffering, that I have a very clear, sweet soprano voice. I love singing, and that night my voice was particularly clear, and I FELT every word I sang.

Father Egan thanked me, and asked if I could sing, "COME BACK TO ERIN." I complied, and then, at the

request of Father Daly, Father Egan sang, with much effect and pathos, accompanying himself, the sweetest of all Irish ballads, "KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN;" and though many years have passed since then, yet I never hear this song without going back, in memory, to that evening long ago, and no one knows or can ever realize the anguish of soul I endure.

After some more music, and, when my cousin James and the two Mission Fathers, with Father Daly, had finished their game of whist, Elizabeth rang the bell, and the parlor-maid brought in glasses and hot water, whiskey etc. Father Daly undertook to make some punch, and after each had partaken of a glass, good-nights were said, and our guests departed. My cousin James, taking up a bedroom candle, offered to show Father Egan to his room. After the door had closed upon them cousin Elizabeth said:—

"Well, Marjory, did you spend a pleasant evening?"

"Yes, indeed," I replied.

"And how did you like Father Egan's singing?"

"I think he has a very sweet tenor voice," I answered.

"He has, indeed," responded my cousin. "I never heard but one who sang Kathleen Mavourneen with such feeling and pathos before, and he is dead."

"Who was it, cousin?" I inquired. "Some old adorer of yours?"

She looked confused, but recovering herself she replied:

"No, my dear Marjory, not one of my adorers;" and

then as tears gathered in her eyes she said, with trembling voice, "it was your father, and he sang it the first evening he met your mother. I was present and played the accompaniment for him. She was my own cousin; her mother and mine were sisters."

I did not say a word; my heart was pierced. My cousin took my hand in hers and said:—

"Marjory, how do you like Father Egan?"

She bent her eyes earnestly on my face; I hesitated a moment, then said:—

"If I were in any trouble or perplexity, I feel that I would go to him for advice. He impresses me as no other priest ever has before."

My cousin threw her arms around me.

"Oh, Marjory," she cried, "don't, don't say so. Oh, may God and Our Lady shield you!"

My cousin's words surprised me. I gently disengaged her arms from around my neck.

"Good-night, Elizabeth," I said, kissing her; and as I walked upstairs I kept saying in my heart, "I will seek his advice, for I feel he understands me."

CHAPTER VII.

NOT AS THE PRIEST, BUT AS A MAN.

ON the following Sunday the Mission Fathers commenced their work. I attended the services and received considerable help. Their sermons brought me in closer contact with the sufferings of Christ, and aroused all the religious fervour of my better nature. Father Daly advised me to take advantage of the presence of Father O'Connor, the Jesuit Provincial, who was leading the retreat, and to seek his advice in the confessional. Father O'Connor was much revered as a missionary, and received frequent calls from religious communities of nuns to conduct their retreats both in England and Ireland. As a rule, a Jesuit will take the twofold position of confessor and director not only to nuns, but also to those among the laity who hold important positions in private families, business houses, or under the government. It is an acknowledged fact that women especially, as a rule, prefer making their confession to a Jesuit rather than to a secular priest. This, no doubt, is in consequence of the peculiar fitness of the Jesuit (acquired of special training) for the purpose.

No religious order, or, indeed, men of any profession, understand human nature so thoroughly as do the Jesuits.

There is no peculiarity of the human disposition of which they have not made a thorough study. They are adepts at winning the confidence of those with whom they come in contact. They are cultured, highly educated, understand the art of making themselves agreeable, especially so amongst wealthy Protestants, and not infrequently succeed in causing such to turn over to the Catholic Church; or, if they cannot accomplish this, they do not fail in obtaining large sums of money from the object of their particular interest. Like the majority of my sex, I was too glad to have an opportunity of seeking the advice of so skilled a confessor as a Jesuit Provincial, and I was not slow in taking advantage of it.

Accordingly, after the mission had been in progress for a few days, I sought Father O'Connor one afternoon in the confessional, and for two hours listened to the advice of him I looked upon as God's representative. Oh, how well I remember with what skill he drew from me the whole history of my parents as I knew it, and yet he said VERY LITTLE!

But how wonderfully soothed and comforted I felt as I left the confessional and knelt down before the altar-rails to make my thanksgiving and repeat the few prayers he had given me as a penance. I had promised the priest in the confessional that I would allow myself to be guided (as he directed me to) by Father Daly in the future; and he, on his part, promised to see and speak with Father Daly and to give me final advice before the closing of the mission.

This promise he kept, and in the course of a conversation with him in the confessional I once more promised to enter a religious community. The sermons preached during the mission had wielded their influence over me. I was in a disposition to be obedient, and so I resolved once more to leave my future in Father Daly's hands. But even whilst I made this resolve, and promised with my lips, it seemed as if my heart kept saying no, no. But He who reads all hearts knows that I tried to put this thought far aside.

It was a few days after the departure of Father O'Connor that Father Daly met with a serious accident. He was out calling on a parishioner; and returning home in the dark, he missed his footing, and, falling over a large stone, broke his ankle. There being no house close by, and unable to rise, he had lain on the road for three or four hours, where a couple of farm laborers, who had been to an adjoining village and were returning past midnight, found him and carried him home. The exposure to the night air had given him a severe chill, and had added to the pain of his broken ankle, and there was a prospect of his confinement to the house for some time.

Under these circumstances my cousin had, at the request of Father Daly, written to the Bishop, informing him of the accident, and asking that Father Egan be allowed to remain for the performance of his duties until some other arrangement could be made. Of course, we were very sorry to hear of Father Daly's accident, for he was a favourite with every one. He was a *genuine* IRISH PRIEST. Father Egan

took up his quarters at the parsonage, and consequently we did not see much of him for some weeks. But after that, when Father Daly was getting better and able to be left in the care of the housekeeper, he would come up to the house in the evenings, and talk with cousin on matters of interest to the parish or play a game of cribbage or cards, whilst Elizabeth would play and sing, and I would be engaged upon some needlework.

Sometimes, looking up suddenly, I would meet the gaze of Father Egan, who seemed to be studying me. And I, well, often I found myself thinking of him! He had become my confessor since Father Daly's accident, and I knew not how to account for it then, but every time I entered the confessional Father Egan seemed to gain a peculiar influence over me. His advice and instruction were particularly helpful to me, and instead of being irritable with me as Father Daly was, he, on the contrary, was all gentleness and sympathy, and I found myself often longing for the end of the week so that I might be able to speak with him under the seal of confession. Occasionally I would meet him in my walks through the neighbourhood or at the house of some parishioner to whom I would carry some little delicacy from Elizabeth. At such times he would walk home with me, and then enter the house and remain to dinner or tea.

And so the weeks passed into months, and May came around—May, the month dedicated to the Virgin Mary, when it is usual to decorate the church and the altar, as

well as the statue of Mary, with the most beautiful flowers, and also to have benediction service every evening, accompanied by the recitation of the rosary in honor of the Blessed Virgin. And, that May month, Father Egan was very anxious not only that the church should be decorated, but that the Confraternity of the Children of Mary should be specially identified for their devotion to Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. And so every evening the Sodality would be present with their medals attached to a piece of blue ribbon worn around their necks. Oh, how to-night I go back in memory to that time! What would I not give to have those days back again with all their innocence? But why wish or long for that which can NEVER BE?

One evening, the last week in May—I remember it well—my cousin James had gone to Dublin on business that would detain him until next day, and Elizabeth, taking advantage of his absence and of the fact that we had no visitors, had also driven to the adjoining village to visit some friends, so that I was alone in the house with the servants. I had been to benediction, and on my return sat down by the open window of the parlor. The May moon was streaming into the room, flooding it and the garden with a soft light.

Everything breathed of peace; all seemed at rest but my own heart, and within it there was an aching void, an eager longing for something I could not attain, and then—I know not how to account for it—but I was conscious of

the same peculiar influence that in those days as well as in the present at times surrounds me, and so, as I sat there that beautiful May evening, with closed eyes and saddened heart, my mother's form seemed to stand before me, and my thoughts went back again to the old home. Again I was a merry, happy, school-girl, with no shade of trouble or sorrow in my heart. Then I was kneeling beside my mother, listening as she told me of the sadness that had entered her life. Once more I was promising her that I should enter a religious house; and so, scene after scene of all that had transpired since then up to that present hour came up before me, and from the depths of my sad heart I cried out, as would a weary child, "COME BACK, MOTHER, OH, COME BACK!" and surely that evening I felt her hand passing caressingly over my head as in days of yore. And it was her voice whispering so tenderly my name, and under this influence the restlessness died out of my heart, a quiet peace entered, and so I sat there, I know not how long; but if, as some say [and believe, the spirits of our loved ones do return and hover round us, then, indeed, my gentle mother was with me that evening as a ministering angel.

So lost was I to all else beside that I did not hear the parlor door open nor was I conscious of any other presence until a hand was laid upon my shoulder, and a voice said: "My child, why are you so quiet? I have been here for some time watching you."

Startled beyond all control, I raised my head to find

Father Egan standing by my side. Ah, why was it that at that moment it seemed as if *all* the brightness was dying out of my young life, that there was a severing of something, and that I felt a cloud settling over me? I go back at this moment, after all these years, to the memories of that night. I see again the moonbeams break and quiver, and hear the low murmur of a voice that was to lead me from the bright paths of innocence, joy, and peace in the lark valley of sin and sorrow—a voice full of sweetness that hid the poison of the asp. And so he came that evening under the garb of religion, straight from the altar, where only an hour before he had officiated as a priest of God, and had given as such his benediction to the people; came with a smiling face, but with treachery in his heart, and I, in my simple faith, without even suspecting it, had allowed myself to be influenced by him. And that evening, when I recovered from my first feeling of surprise, the blood rushed to my cheeks as he, drawing up a chair and taking my hands in his, said: “Now, tell me of what you were thinking when I came into the room.” And I answered simply, “OF MY MOTHER.”

He remained silent for a few minutes, and then said, as he stooped down, bringing his head almost on a level with my face:—

“I came to speak with you alone. I have longed to have this opportunity.”

Back surged the blood to my face and neck, and my hand that he held trembled; but I uttered no word.

“MY CHILD, LOOK UP!”

I obeyed him. It was not in my power to do otherwise. And so, as he looked into my face, he said, still retaining my hand within his, “Tell me, Marjory,” using for the first time my Christian name, “why you are in distress. Will you not confide in me, and, if possible, allow me to help you in whatever may be troubling you?”

Coafide in him! Oh, yes. Even as he spoke it seemed as if my heart went out to him in perfect trust. How often had I found myself longing to speak to him, unrestrained by the precincts of the confessional, and *now* he was sitting by my side, asking me to confide in him. But my tongue refused to speak. Then he laid his hand upon my head and commenced smoothing my hair.

“Have you nothing to say, Marjory?”

But still I remained silent. Again he spoke; and oh, what sympathy his voice expressed!

“I AM ANXIOUS, MY CHILD, TO HELP YOU BEFORE I GO AWAY.”

This time I looked at him, and to my heart came a dull, aching pain, as I said:—

“Going away! Oh, no, do not say so. What shall I do? I will have no one to whom I can speak, and the rest of my days I will have to spend in a life hateful to me;” and, laying down my head, I sobbed—ah, yes, sobbed as I had never done since the night of my mother’s death. •

“HUSH, MY CHILD! YOU MUST NOT GIVE WAY THUS!”

But I did not heed him. More violently than ever I sobbed; and he allowed me to, at last. When, wearied out, I still lay with my head on the arm of my chair, he said, once more passing his hand over my head—

“Marjory.”

I raised my head, almost ashamed of the grief I had exhibited, and, as I allowed myself to look at him, he spoke:—

“Tell me, little one, is the prospect of a convent life so hard to bear?”

“Oh, Father, I cried, “I would do **ANYTHING** to escape it. Can you not help me? Can you not suggest some way out of it?”

His hand no longer rested on my head. There was perfect silence for a few minutes, as, with downcast eyes, he toyed with the little crucifix attached to his black silk watchguard. At last, raising his head and looking me earnestly in the face, he asked—

“How old were you, Marjory, when your mother died?”

“Fifteen,” I answered.

“And at that early age she informed you of your father’s identity?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“And,” he continued, “you have no feeling of condemnation towards your parents for their sin against our holy religion?”

“Father,” I replied, “I acknowledge their sin, but I

remember also that they were MY PARENTS, and their memory is dear to me."

"Tell me, Marjory," he said, "if your parents were alive, and you knew their position as you do to-night, would you condemn them if they remained loyal to each other?"

"No," I answered.

"Think once more before you answer again," he said. "Remember, your father was a priest."

"There is no need to remind me of this fact, Father," I replied, bitterly. "It is never absent from my mind. Is it not this that has darkened my life and condemned me to a future I loathe and dread? Oh," I continued, the old wayward spirit taking possession of me, "why am I to be debarred the pleasure that this world offers? I am young; my heart cannot be satisfied with only the prospect of a long life spent within the walls of a convent. I would rather die."

I had risen to my feet and was standing before him. Passion filled my heart, and showed itself on my face and in my voice. I was no longer mistress of myself. Father Egan, too, had risen, and so we stood face to face. His eyes fixed themselves on mine so I could not remove them. Gradually the passion died out of my heart, and then, taking my hand and leading me back to my chair, he said—

"Sit down there."

I obeyed him, for I seemed to have lost all will-power.

Then, once more taking the chair beside mine, he sat down, with his eyes still fixed on mine.

"Marjory," he said, and his voice sounded soft and low, "I have spent many hours of anxious thought upon you. I have watched you when you least knew or suspected it. I UNDERSTAND your disposition and how you chafe under your present restraint, and I dread to think of what your suffering would be if you carried out the desire of your parents and the advice of Father Daly. Marjory, you are not at present one who would find happiness in a religious community."

"If then you are convinced of this, Father, would you advise me, you, a priest, to make a mockery of God and our holy religion by embracing a life to which, in my heart, I can never give my consent?"

"I am not speaking to you this evening, Marjory, as a priest; in the confessional I occupy that position towards you. I speak to you *now*, not as the priest, but as a man."

"And what would you advise?"

"Do not forget, Marjory, that I shall soon leave Ireland for a foreign field, but I will help you before I go."

"How will you do it?" I asked, wondering what he would answer.

"I cannot tell you, to-night, all I would wish to, but I want to know if you will trust me—if you will do as I tell you, in order to rid yourself of the life you dread?"

"OH! HOW GLADLY," I replied, "will I do anything."

"And you will leave your cousin's home without saying anything to him about it?"

This rather startled me; I hesitated. Father Egan was watching me, but my hesitation lasted only a moment. Looking into his face, I said—

"Yes, I am willing to do as you say. I will obey you implicitly, for you will never tell me to do anything that is not right."

A shadow seemed to flit across his face, but only for an instant; then the next he smiled, and said—

"Have you no friends in Dublin with whom you sometimes spend a week?"

"Yes," I replied. "There is Captain and Mrs. Shaw."

"And, if you should receive a letter from them or a telegram asking you to visit them, would there be any difficulty in obtaining your cousins's consent?"

"No; cousin James thinks a great deal of Mrs. Shaw, and has always given his consent gladly when I have received an invitation to spend a few days with her."

"When will your cousin return home?"

"To-morrow evening, but Elizabeth will return after breakfast."

"And now, Majory, tell me once more that you are willing to trust me."

"Yes," I replied, this time without hesitation.

"If you keep to this you will never have cause to regret doing so."

Then, taking an envelope out of his pocket, he continued—

"I have come, to-night, prepared to make this offer of help, and you will find in the envelope written instructions; in three days' time you will receive a telegram to come to Mrs. Shaw, and you will pack only a few necessities in your portmanteau; take the afternoon train for Dublin, and if you cannot do so, catch the next early morning one; I will meet you at the depot, and then I will tell you my plans for your future. I will not be able to remain in Dublin; I must return the same evening, as I do not wish my absence to be known; and now, Majory," he continued, "you will not see me in this house again, nor anywhere, until you meet me in Dublin, and I want the rest of this evening to bring you some happiness; so come and sing something for me."

Saying which he went up to the piano, and, opening it, he ran over the keys; then, taking up a piece of music, which happened to be "Killarney," he said—

"Come, Majory, and sing this for me."

But I could not.

"Ah, well," he said, "if you will not sing for me, I will for you; what would you like?"

What was it that prompted me to say "**KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN**?"

"Is it a favorite with you?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied; "my mother loved it, and my father sang it for her the first time he ever met her."

He looked up into my face.

"Your father sang it the first time he met your mother,"

he repeated, and he continued : "AND I SANG IT THE FIRST NIGHT I SAW YOU."

Yes ; I had forgotten this, but his words recalled the fact to my mind. A choking sensation prevented me from answering his remark, and turning again to the piano he played the first few bars, and then sang the song. And as I sat and listened my whole heart was stirred within me, so when he had finished I could find no voice with which to thank him. He came up to say good-night, and as he did so I arose from my chair and held out my hand to him. But without noticing it, and coming up close to me and taking my face and holding it between his hands, he said—

"Majory, look at me," and, as I met his eyes looking into mine, he said—

"Kathleen Mavourneen!"

And as he said this my eyes could no longer look into his, for at that moment my heart stood revealed to me. I knew now what the influence was he held over me ; and he—did he read my heart ? I know not for certain, but looking back now I think he did, for he, stooping down, kissed my forehead. saying—

"Good bye, until I see you in Dublin."

He left the room, and I sank once more into my chair by the open window, and looked out upon the beauty of the night. ● I heard his footsteps on the garden path, and as I watched him a cloud passed over the face of the moon, hiding his form from my view and casting a shadow

MY LIFE IN THE CONVENT.

all around;—a shadow which was destined to follow me through early life and in after-years, when I had almost learned to forget of its existence, only once more to reappear bringing with it misery, destruction, and ruination to all that I had tried to do in reparation for the years that I had wasted.

Ah me, where are the promises he made that night? Where! Doomed, like an unfruitful blossom, to wither and die. And dead is that night, and dead the moon that lit up the garden path and flooded the room with its silvery rays. After all these years naught lives of that night but the shadow that crossed the moon and entered my life. For all things that are not born of God end in darkness and in ashes. And those who, like me, sow in folly ever reap in sorrow. And scant pity has the world for one who has been guilty, NOT OF SINNING, but of trying to live it down. And the HARDEST OF ALL BLOWS directed against a woman who would fain bury the past from out her sight are those of her own sex. God forgives and forgets, casting the sin of the repentant one behind his back. Man sympathizes and holds out a helping hand; whilst woman NEVER FORGETS, or seldom misses the opportunity to remind her less fortunate sister that, however much she may try to live down the past, yet there is a bridge between them, and at the same time she will welcome to her house and her table, and will introduce to her friends, the man who was sharer in the guilt of the woman she despises. And so I suppose the verdict for all

time in this world will be: "STONE the woman; let the man go free."

CHAPTER VIII.

STRUGGLING AGAINST TEMPTATION.

THE next evening my cousin James returned. Elizabeth had driven over in her phaeton to the station to meet him, and when he sat down to tea I saw that he was in very good spirits. This, I learned during the meal, was in consequence of the financial success attending the business that had taken him to Dublin, and in which, some months before, he had risked a large sum of money.

"I am so glad, James, that it has been a success, for now I shall be able to purchase the white vestments I wish to give to Father Egan, who, I understand, will leave us now very soon," said Elizabeth.

"I shall be very happy, Elizabeth, to give you a check to carry out your good intention," said her husband. "And that reminds me," he continued, "of something I have in my pocket for the good Father."

"What is it, James?" inquired his wife. "And may we be permitted to look at it?"

"Here it is, my dear," he said, at the same time taking a case out of his pocket and handing it to his wife.

She stretched out her hand to receive it, and opening

the case took out a beautiful ebony crucifix with the figure of our Saviour in solid silver.

"Oh, how beautiful! Is it not, Marjory?" she cried, after examining it and then passing it to me.

"Yes, it is indeed," I answered. "And I think Father Egan will value it."

"I am glad you both approve of my choice," said cousin James, with a pleased smile, as I handed the crucifix back to him. "And, Marjory," he said, "here is a five-pound note; I know you would like to give the Father something before he leaves;" and opening his pocket-book he took out the note and held it towards me; but I could not accept it, with the consciousness that I was going to leave him and the home he had given me; so I said—

"Thank you, cousin James, but I do not care to give Father Egan anything; the presents from Elizabeth and you will be sufficient; or," I continued, noticing the look of surprise on his face, "if I do make up my mind to give him anything, I have a book that will do very well."

"Well, Marjory," my cousin answered, in a disappointed voice, as he replaced the money in his pocket-book, "you do not seem to appreciate the good work Father Egan has done during his stay with us, and I, for one, am sorry he is going away."

"You are not alone, James, in your regret that Father Egan should leave us; it is the universal feeling throughout the parish, for he has endeared himself to rich and poor alike;" and she continued: "I think you miscon-

strue Marjory's words, James, for I am sure she shares in the general regret at his loss. Is it not so, Marjory?" she asked, looking at me.

What could I do but answer "Yes"? But, as I did so, I despised myself for the deceit I was practising.

"Well," said cousin James, "I will walk over to the parsonage after tea, for I want to see Father Daly, and I will meet Father Egan after benediction and bring him over here to spend the evening."

I did not say anything to the arrangement, but I knew Father Egan would not come.

"Oh! by the bye," said cousin James, "did Father Egan call whilst I was away?"

He directed his question to his wife, but she reminded him of her visit to her friend, and then said—

"Marjory can tell you."

Cousin James therefore turned his face to me, and I answered—

"Yes, Father Egan called last evening after benediction, and, as you were both away, he remained talking with me in the parlor."

"Did he mention about going away?" asked my cousin.

"Yes," I replied; "I understood him to say, now that Father Daly is better, and will soon be able to resume his duties, that he would leave in a short time."

"Have you heard where his appointment will be, James?" asked his wife.

"I am not quite sure," replied her husband; but I be-

lieve, from what Father Daly said the last time I was at the parsonage, that a number of young priests were to be sent to Australia or India, and probably Father Egan would be amongst them."

The entrance of the servant prevented any further conversation, and tea being over, Elizabeth and I, after putting on our bonnets and wraps, prepared to go to benediction, whilst cousin James walked over to the parsonage to have his talk with Father Daly. As we entered the church, Father Egan was kneeling in front of the altar, saying the rosary, to which the congregation responded. I knelt down, but my mind refused to concentrate itself upon the object of devotion. But when the rosary was finished and the benediction service commenced, when the organ pealed out and the congregation joined in singing the litany, then my soul seemed once more to gain freedom from the thoughts that had haunted me throughout the day. All my better nature was aroused, and with it the desire to tell my cousin Elizabeth of Father Egan's conversation the previous evening.

And I almost resolved to do so, and by and by, when after the litany the organ once more pealed out and the choir and congregation sang the soul-inspiring "TANTUM ERGO," and when in the solemn hush every head was bowed as he held up the blessed sacrament, surely my good angel was by my side pointing out the wrong I would do by adopting so much deceit. Doubts seemed to fill my heart, and when benediction

was over I whispered to Elizabeth that I would remain a little longer in the church. She went out, leaving me before the altar of our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, which occupied a place at the end of the right-hand aisle of the church. Soon the altar-boy came out from the sacristy and commenced putting out the lights upon the main altar. Then, coming down the aisle and seeing me before the side altar, he passed on, allowing the candles on it to remain lit, only asking me in a whisper if I would put them out before leaving the church.

And so, as I knelt there in the hush and quiet of that May evening, the gray shadows crept in through the window, and as I looked up into the face of the statue on the altar representing Mary Immaculate, I prayed, and as I prayed I wept. Ah me, that last evening in church where I had so often joined in the celebration of the Mass; where, in the consciousness of youth and innocence, I had with tender love and devotion laid my offerings at the feet of Mary, whose child I called myself. Yes, that last evening comes back again with all its associations, for, as I knelt there struggling against temptation, a temptation that I had almost overcome, then the tempter came and stood by my side. And the accents of his voice stirred the inmost depths of my heart.

And as I looked from the cold, expressionless, lifeless face of Mary into the living face looking down into mine, as I once more gazed into the eyes that so strongly held

mine and subdued all my own will, the hour of my salvation passed by and my doom was sealed.

As I passed out from the church into the gathering shadows he stood at the door and watched me, and looking back I saw him there, and as I saw him then I see him now, standing in the porch of the church clad in his priest's cassock and beretta with the crucifix in his girdle, his breviary in his hand. The memory of that night is stamped forever on my heart, and each time I see it, my spirit fails, and my heart forgives for the sake of long ago.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MASK OF DECEIT.

"Am all alone. Come and spend a week with me. Will meet you on the noon train."—MIRIAM SHAW.

So read the telegram that was placed in my hand the next morning about nine o'clock by Ellen, the parlor-maid. I went into the study, where I knew I would find cousin James, who generally occupied himself in there with the morning paper and his mail until eleven o'clock.

"What is it, Marjory?" he said, looking up, as, after having knocked at the door, I entered the room.

For reply I held out the telegram, which he read, and then, handing it back to me, he said—

"Well, cousin, I do not like the idea of letting you

run about alone, but, as Mrs. Shaw promises to meet you at the station, you can, if you wish, accept her invitation."

"Thank you," I replied. "I think I would like to go very much to Dublin."

"Well, then, Marjory, you had better ask Elizabeth to drive you over to the station. The train leaves at eleven o'clock, and you will not have much time to spare, as it is a good half-hour's drive."

"Very well, cousin James," I answered. "I will find Elizabeth and ask her to drive me, and I will come down to say good-by to you before I go."

"You had better say it now, Marjory," he replied, "as I am going out to visit some of the tenants, and may leave before you."

Then, going up to him, I held out my hand and said, "Good-by, cousin."

"Good-by, my dear," he said, and his tone of voice sounded kindlier than I had ever heard it before. "I hope you will have a pleasant visit."

I turned to leave the study, but, as I placed my hand upon the door-knob I hesitated, and then, yielding to the promptings of my heart, I went back to where he sat, and, standing so that he would not see my face, I said—

"Cousin James, I want to ask you to forget every unkind or harsh word I ever said to you since I have been in your house. I want you to say you forgive me."

"Why, Marjory," he said, wheeling his chair around.

and thus sitting before me, "what in the world is the matter with you? You surely do not think I keep any of your angry sayings in my heart. Forgive you?" he said, taking my hand. "Of course I do; not only now, but did so long ago. So now, do not think anything more about what has passed, but go up to Dublin and enjoy yourself for a week or more, if Mrs. Shaw desires you to stay."

Again the opportunity presented itself, and my better nature prompted me to cast aside the mask of deceit, but I allowed the moment to pass by, and answered—

"I am glad, cousin, that you have forgiven me; and oh," I cried, "if only I HAD NOT to go to a convent; if only I were allowed to live my life in the world, I would not be so unhappy, cousin James," I said, hoping, if possible, his answer would be one that would prevent the necessity of leaving home. "Is there no other way open to me?"

"He frowned, and I saw that he was annoyed as he said in reply—

"I have seen no reason to change my views in regard to your future. You do not go to the convent until your next birthday, and that will not come until September, so that there will be time enough to discuss the matter before then. And now," he continued, becoming once more the cold, stern man of former days, "I must ask you to excuse me, Marjory, as I have a great deal to do this morning."

"Good-by, cousin James," I said, passing out of the door, for his words had once more aroused my desire to escape from the hated prospect of bondage. I met Elizabeth in the hall, and, telling her of my intended departure by the eleven o'clock train, asked her if she could drive me to the station.

"Oh, Marjory," she replied, "I am so sorry, but I have an engagement that I cannot very well put off."

"Well, never mind," I said, almost glad that she could not go, for I loved her and hated the idea of deceiving her.

"I will have Tom drive me over, unless you are going to use the phaeton."

"No, I shall not require the phaeton, my dear. My engagement does not take me out of the house. I am chairman of the committee organized to select a suitable present to give to Father Egan from the parishioners before he leaves. How long will you be away, Marjory?" she inquired. "We want you back for the occasion."

Hardly knowing what to reply, I said:—

"THE TELEGRAM MENTIONS ONE WEEK."

"Well, be sure and get back in time, although Father Egan will not leave for a week after your return."

We had been standing in the open doorway of the hall, and just at that moment two ladies passed into the garden and approached the house.

"Two members of my committee," said Elizabeth, recognizing them.

"Well, I will go up and get ready," I said, glad to escape, "and will see you before I leave, to say good-by."

"Very well, dear," said my cousin, as she walked down the steps and went to meet her visitors, and I went up to my own room to get ready.

I had packed up all I thought I would require the evening before after benediction, and all I had to do was to remove my mourning gown and to replace it with a dark-blue tailor-made dress, and then to arrange the articles in my dressing-case. By this time the phaeton which Elizabeth ordered was at the door, and Ellen had come up for my portmanteau and dressing-case. I put on a large dark-blue felt hat, and tying a gauze veil around my neck I followed her down stairs. I paused at the parlor door, and Elizabeth, excusing herself to her visitors, came out as far as the hall door with me.

"GOOD-BY, MARJORY," she said, putting her arms around me and kissing me. "Give my love to Mrs. Shaw, and be sure you enjoy yourself. And write to me when you arrive, for I shall be anxious to know that you are safe."

"Good-by, Elizabeth," I said, kissing her as the tears came to my eyes. "Good-by, and forgive me for so often being irritable."

"Why, you goose," she said, once more kissing me, "one would think you were going away for years instead of a few days. But I see Tom is impatient, and, indeed," looking at her watch, "you have no time to spare. Oh," she cried as I was descending the steps to go to the phae-

ton, "wait a moment, Marjory, I had almost forgotten something;" and following me down she placed a purse in my hands. "There, James asked me to give you this with his love; you are to spend it for anything you want."

Before I could say anything she had gone back again and was standing once more in the doorway. And, as I entered the phaeton and was driven away, she waved her handkerchief to me, and that was the last time I ever saw her. Poor Elizabeth! had it not been for her husband and his stern determination that I should enter a convent I might to-day be a very different woman from what I am. That she grieved for me in after-years I know, but she was powerless to help me. . . .

Two hours later the train steamed into the station. I had suffered intensely during the journey. I felt nervous and frightened, and as the guard helped me out of the first-class carriage and handed me my dressing-case I saw Father Egan approaching. He greeted me with a smile, and escorting me to the waiting-room requested me to remain there until he saw to my portmanteau. In a few minutes he returned, and then escorting me to a cab he told the driver to take me to a private hotel he named on Sackville Street, telling me at the same time that a room had been taken for me, and that he would be there in a very short time after my arrival.

Soon I found myself in a pleasant bedroom, and evidently the proprietor had received instructions to see that I was cared for. For I had not been long in my room when

a knock came to the door, and a neat-looking chambermaid entered to my answer, "Come in," bearing with her a tray on which was set a delicate luncheon, and, what was more acceptable still, a pot of tea. She placed the tray down, and curtesying (after the fashion of all old country servants), she said—

"Is there anything else I can bring you, Miss?"

"No, THANK YOU," I replied, and then asked her name. ANNIE, IF YOU PLEASE, MISS," she answered.

"Well, Annie, I am expecting a visitor, and I should like to be informed as soon as he arrives."

"Yes, Miss," she said; "Master told me to tell you—the gentleman, leastways—I beg your pardon, Miss, the reverend Father is in the parlor now, and when you had finished your luncheon I was to show you down to the room."

"Then, Annie, if you will pour out my tea whilst I bathe my face and put on a fresh collar, I will not detain him very long."

In a few minutes I was ready, and, after drinking the tea, but unable to eat anything, I followed the maid into the parlor. Father Egan was there, and, when the servant had left, closing the door after her, he came and sat down beside me.

"You have kept your promise, my child," he said, "and now we have not much time to lose, for I must go back to-night, in case my absence should be discovered. Father Daly believes that I am visiting some parishioners, and

will not be home in time for benediction, and he will officiate for me. And now, Marjory," he continued, taking my hand, "let me hear you say once more that you are willing to trust me implicitly."

"I am, Father," I replied, "I willingly promise you implicit confidence. I will do whatever you advise."

"Very well; then the first thing is for you to write a letter to your cousin, which I will mail to-night. Tell her you have arrived safely, and will write her in two or three days. This will keep her satisfied. See, here are pen and ink. Do it at once, and then we will be free to talk."

So I wrote as he dictated, and, sealing the letter, gave it to him. After placing it in his breast-pocket, he said—

"Marjory, I can spend only a few hours with you. And now, little one, pay attention to what I say. First, remember I am risking a great deal. If my part in the step you have taken were to become known to the Bishop, I would suffer disgrace."

"Oh, Father Egan, why did you not tell me this before?" I said. "I would not have you incur any danger on my account."

"Well, child," he answered, "if I am willing to risk it, that is my affair. And remember, you have promised to be obedient. So this evening take a carriage and drive over to Mrs. Shaw's. Remain there until to-morrow, taking nothing with you but your dressing-case. Here is a pocket-book. You will find some money in it. I want

you to use it in purchasing yourself a necessary wardrobe, so that you can tell Mrs. Shaw to-morrow morning that you are on a shopping expedition. Say goodbye to her, and tell her that you will not return."

"But should she wish to accompany me," I asked, "what can I say?"

"You must make some excuse, Marjory," he said; "or let her go with you, if necessary to allay suspicion, and then, after you have purchased a few things, tell her you have an appointment, and then, when she leaves you, you must return, complete your purchases, and meet me at this hotel at six o'clock."

"I will try to carry out your instructions, Father," I answered, "but I do not require any money. I have sufficient in my purse for all I may have to purchase."

"What do you call sufficient?" he said, smiling. "Had you not better examine your purse?"

I did so. I found in it two one-pound notes, three sovereigns in gold, and some loose silver."

"That will not go very far, Marjory. So you had better take this pocket-book;" and he pressed it into my hand.

"But I have more money, Father," I answered, thinking of the purse Elizabeth had given me, and, taking it out of my pocket, I found it contained four crisp, new five-pound notes.

"WELL, NEVER MIND; you must do as I tell you. So keep the pocket-book; it will come handy when you least expect it."

"Father," I said, "will you tell me to-morrow evening when I see you just what your plan is for my future? Do not think me impatient, but, until I know definitely what I am to do, I shall feel more or less restless."

"Yes, Marjory, I will tell you to-morrow," he answered, "and it will be for you to accept or reject it."

I cannot tell what it was that prompted me to say—"I know, whatever it is, I will accept it, for any life is preferable to the one designed for me by my relations."

"Are you sure you understand what you are saying, my child?" asked Father Egan.

"Yes," I replied; "for *what* could be worse than an imprisonment for life in an institution I dread?"

"*Marjory, come and sit on this hassock,*" he said, drawing one up to his side; and I arose and did as he desired. And as I sat there he laid his hand on my head and said—

"WHY IS IT SO HATEFUL TO YOU?"

"I cannot answer your question," I replied; "for I hardly know myself why."

"Poor little woman!" he said. "You have not been very happy since you lost your mother."

As he said this I felt the tears gathering, and sobbed out—

"No; I have no one who really cares for me, now that she is gone."

"Do not say so, Marjory;" and then he drew my face towards his own, and once more, as he looked into my eyes, the blood rushed to my cheeks.

"Do you think," he continued, "that if I had not any sympathy for you I would be sitting where I am this evening?"

"No," I answered; "and the thought that you might get into trouble on my account will haunt me."

"Well, you must not allow it to give you any sorrow, for I would have risked ten times more to serve and befriend you, for, from the first moment I met you, you have never been absent from my mind."

"Father," I cried, "how can I ever thank you? I had no idea that you were so much interested in me."

"And does it make you happy to know it now?"

"Indeed it does," I replied.

"Then, Marjory, you would be sorry if I were to go away to-night and never come back again?"

I hid my face in my hands, and the dull, aching pain came to my heart.

"Answer me, Marjory," he said, moving my hands and holding my face between his hands, as he had done the night in the parlor at home, at the same time looking into my eyes; and I answered—

"No; if you go away, I don't want to live; for you are the only friend I have."

And then he placed his strong arms around me.

"Little one, I want you to live and be happy. I care for you as I never cared for any one else, and for your sake I am willing to give up all—just as your father did for your mother. Marjory, will you trust me?"

To say his words startled me only gives a very weak idea of the effect they produced. For a moment it seemed as if I were paralyzed. I was shocked, for, though my own heart had been revealed to me, I had never for one instant surmised that he cared for me other than as a parishioner in whom he was particularly interested. He noticed the effect of his words and said—

“Have I shocked you, Marjory?”

“Oh, Father Egan!” was all I could say, and then I burst into tears. But he held me closer to him, trying to soothe me.

“Marjory, child, do not grieve so. Hush! I will not say anything more that will cause you to shed tears. Try to forget all I said, and do not allow it to trouble you.”

But the excitement I had undergone during the past few days, and especially that of the morning, had completely unnerved me and brought on an attack of hysteria; so it was some time before I could overcome myself. At last, when my sobs had ceased, he said—

“There, child, do not cry any more. It was wrong on my part to say to you what I did, so forget it; and as I have only a very short time to remain, tell me what your own ideas are for your future.”

“But,” I answered, “I have none; I do not know what to do.”

“Well, Marjory, will you go to Mrs. Shaw’s this evening, and make your purchases to-morrow; and then meet me at this hotel as arranged in the evening? and,

perhaps, by that time you will think of some way in which I can help you before I sail for foreign mission work. And now," he continued, "I must leave you, and as I go down stairs, I will order a carriage for you to go to Mrs. Shaw's, and when I see you to-morrow evening you must try and have your smiles all back again. So good-by, Marjory, until to-morrow."

And as he rose from his chair I also stood up.

"Won't you shake hands?" he said.

And so I put out mine, which he grasped, saying at the same time—

"You will try to forget what I said"

"I am not angry, but"—

"But what?" he asked, drawing me closer to him.

"I was a little startled and frightened, and I could not bear to think that you were going away, and so I could not help crying."

"Well, dear, never mind about it now; only tell me one thing—do you care for me at all?"

And I answered, simply, "Yes, more than I ever did for any one in my life."

"And yet, Marjory, you are afraid to trust me."

"No," I replied. "Not afraid, but I do not want you to get into any trouble with the Bishop."

"Then, if you are not afraid to trust me, think over what I have said, and when I come to-morrow let me know what you will do; and remember, Marjory, in the years

to come, I promise you that you will never have cause to regret that you trusted me."

And stooping down he kissed me and left the room.

.

The midnight hour had passed, and the streets of the great city were quiet, as I sat in my room in the hotel. I had given up my visit to Mrs. Shaw, for I felt too ill and anxious, and I knew she would see that something unusual was the matter with me. Ever since Father Egan had left I had been in my room, and had gone over in my mind his conversation with me, first in my cousin's parlor, then that in the hotel; and I remembered each word, and realized that if I returned home to my cousin's there would be nothing before me but a lifetime within the walls of a convent; and as I was so young I longed to live in the world, to mix with its people; I had seen so little of what I considered life. My heart was enslaved; I saw only a path strewn with flowers, bright and beautiful, but did not think of the canker-worm often hid within their leaves. I imagined that every day that dawned upon me would be peaceful and serene, and my career would be one of unalterable bliss and happiness. I knew nothing at that time of the hollowness and shame that I experienced in the after-years; and, hardly realizing the sacrifice I was making, I chose the world with him, rather than the convent and isolation.

.

Evening shadows gather. I am in the hotel parlor and

he is by my side. I have told him that I will trust him, and taking a ring out of his pocket, a plain wedding-ring, he placed it on my finger. Then kissing the crucifix he called upon God to witness his vow to me, and so we sat and talked and planned, and I knew then that I had allowed my heart to go out to him from the very first evening I ever saw him. And I promised him that evening that, come sorrow or come joy, no word would ever pass my lips that would betray him.

In the after-years, when the shadow rested on me, enveloping me in its darkness, the memory of my promise saved him from a fate that would have been to him death. I stood in the garden of roses, forgetting the thorns that surrounded the stem, and so I lived in the sunshine of his promises until the chill blast came, and the darkening shadow cast its gloom; and as the leaves of the roses droop and die, so in time I learned that promises too are allowed to die without fulfilment, and that the most solemn vow man might make to woman is very rarely kept, and that the punishment in nearly every case falls upon the woman, who becomes the greater sufferer, whilst the man who leads her into disgrace is feted and honored. He is asked into the light and warmth, and the suffering woman is turned adrift into the street to lead a more shameful life or to end her misery in the bed of a dark, sluggish river.

CHAPTER X.

BETWEEN MY LOVED ONES AND ME.

"Coming events cast their shadows before." — CAMPBELL.

The next evening I left Dublin for London. Father Egan gave me a letter of introduction to a lady in Bryanston Square, who received me kindly, and I remained there for three weeks until he left Ireland. He had written to me, giving me the news from home. He told me that my cousin James was deeply incensed, but Elizabeth was grieved. I had written to them previously to my departure from Dublin, telling them that I had left home for good, and that I did so to evade the life that had been mapped out for me. And so at the end of three weeks I received a letter from Father Egan, saying he would be in London inside of two days, and that he would come directly to the house on his arrival in town, I waited those two last days in a state of anxiety; and when at length a cab drove up to the door and the servant announced him I gave way completely, and, as I once more looked into his face I burst into tears, clinging as a child to him, for those three weeks had been so lonely, spent under such circumstances amongst strangers.

I noticed a difference in his appearance in consequence of his change of dress. He no longer wore the garb of a priest, but that of a civilian. And when I called his attention to the fact he smiled, and told me the people in the house did not know he was a priest. Then he informed me that he had seen the Bishop, and that he was not to be sent abroad immediately. This information gave me some comfort, and so as week after week, month after month, passed by he did all in his power to make me happy. My every wish was gratified.

I visited places of public amusement, made a round of the picture galleries, the Tower of London, St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, and other places of historical interest, and sometimes after having been out all day how I welcomed the hour when, in the cosy sitting-room, with the curtains closing out the winter night and a bright fire burning in the grate, I would sit down on a hassock by his side as he read to me ; or, resting in an easy-chair, would listen to him as he played and sang some of the songs I loved to hear. And so as each day went by the tie that bound me to him became stronger. I leaned on him for support. No harsh word ever fell from his lips, and when I asked him if he regretted the step taken he ever answered "No." And yet there were times when I knew he was thinking of our position. And then I would get up, and sitting down at his feet would take his hand, and, though we said nothing, we each understood the other's thoughts ; and so we would often sit thus for an hour,

Twelve months passed away, and a little baby girl came to our home. And oh, how I loved her! How proud I was of her, and for a time after her birth we both felt happier, and life, I think, seemed brighter. And as I looked into the innocent face of my darling I could understand something of the love my mother had for me. And so engrossed was I in baby that I no longer seemed to care about going out in the evenings. The theatres and other amusements lost all charm for me. My heart was bound up in the two I loved with a love that will last as long as my life does. Oh, those days when I did not realize just the position I occupied! when, regardless of the future or what it might bring to me of joy or sorrow, I only lived my life each day, where my every thought, my every act was one of tender love for my dear ones! Oh, how happy I used to be as I clasped my little one to my heart and felt her arms clinging around my neck! How the sweet blue eyes looked into mine; and the baby face lit up with joyful recognition as I entered the room, and, then watching over her tenderly as she grew each day, and hear her lisping "mamma," we would both take her into our arms and cover the sweet face with kisses.

And well do I remember the first evening when the shadow began to fall, the shadow that has never left me since. Father Egan had gone out in the morning as usual, promising to come home at noon, when he would take me out for a drive. But when the noon hour arrived he did not come, and so I waited, thinking something had

detained him, but he would soon be home. However, another hour passed by and still he did not come, and then I began to be uneasy. But at three o'clock I received a telegram saying he had met some friends and would not be home until evening. This relieved me, and so after dinner I told the nurse to dress baby and come with me for a walk in the park. We remained out all the afternoon, returning home about 5.50. My first enquiry was whether he had returned home. The servant answered "Yes;" also, "that he had a gentleman with him in the parlor." This information took me by surprise, for he had *never* brought anyone to our home before. On further inquiry as to who the gentleman might be the parlor-maid said :—

"I think, ma'am, he is a priest."

It seemed as if for a moment my heart ceased to beat.

A feeling of dread came to me, and slowly and wearily I mounted the stairs and entering my bedroom locked the door and threw myself into a chair. A dull, heavy, aching heart alone kept me company.

"What did a priest want?" I kept asking myself. "Why had Father Egan brought him home?"

A thousand fears took possession of me, and at last I lay down upon the floor and sobbed. How long I remained there I do not know. I heard a knock several times at the door, but made no response. At last when the darkness came on I heard a step approaching. A hand turned the knob of the door, and finding it locked Father Egan (for it

was he) called to me to open it. I arose from the floor and let him in.

"Why, Marjory, what are you doing here in the dark?" he exclaimed; and I answered—

"THE PARLOR-MAID SAID YOU HAD A VISITOR, AND SO I THOUGHT IT BETTER NOT TO DISTURB YOU."

"And so," he continued, lighting the gas and drawing me to him, "you preferred to come up and mope in the dark, and make your eyes red with crying?"

He tried to speak in a cheerful tone, but my ears detected the forced gaiety, and so, putting my arm around his neck, I said—

"Who was he, Michael?"

"A college friend," he replied.

"HOW DID YOU COME TO BRING HIM HOME? AND IS HE NOT A PRIEST?" I asked.

"Yes, my dear, he is a priest, and his name is Gallagher; and," he continued, "you will remember I intended coming home at noon to take you for a drive. I had finished the business that had taken me out in the morning, and was on my way to the livery stable to order a carriage when I met Father Gallagher. He at once recognized me, and I accompanied him to a hotel, where we had luncheon and a talk over our college days."

"Did you say anything about me?" I asked, anxiously.

"No, Marjory; your name was not mentioned, from the simple fact that he has never heard of you."

“Yes, Michael; but what excuse did you make to him when you brought him here?”

“There was no excuse necessary. He only supposed I was having a holiday and occupying furnished apartments,” he replied.

“And will he come here again?” I asked.

“I do not think so; but if he should”— He hesitated.

“Well, if he should,” I inquired, looking up into his face, “what will you do?”

Oh, how my heart beat as I asked this question and noticed the change that came over his face! And then, as he still remained silent, I again said—

“WHAT WILL YOU DO?”

Gradually the cloud passed away from his face, and, taking my hand in his as I knelt at his side, he said—

“Trust me, little one, and you will have no cause for regret.”

And as he said this I remembered how he had made the same promise to me when first I decided to give up everything for him; and so I was comforted, and the fear that had come to my heart passed away as we sat there. He related to me many incidents in his college life, and spoke enthusiastically of the great friendship that had existed in those days between Father Gallagher and himself. But, when at last the house was in silence, I lay awake, tossing about, unable to sleep, with the same feeling of dread in my heart, and, though I tried to shake it off, I could not, for between my loved ones and me there arose the black-

robed figure of a priest and the anathema of the church; and so, rising up, I threw on my dressing-gown, and taking up a candle I went into the nursery, where baby lay sleeping in her cradle. I stepped very quietly, fearful lest I should awake her or the nurse, and, placing the candle on the mantel-piece, I stood by the side of my darling and looked down upon her as she lay sleeping there in the innocence of babyhood—one little chubby hand and arm thrown outside the coverlet, the other one grasping her little indiarubber doll that she always took to bed with her. And then an unutterable longing to hold her in my arms took possession of me; and so, taking up a soft shawl, I lifted her out of bed, and, wrapping it around her, I held her closely to my heart, and, leaving the nursery, I carried her to my room and lay down with her in my arms; and, as the dawn began to creep in, I fell asleep.

.

Two months more, and oh, how my life has changed! The dread that came to my heart when first I heard of Father Gallagher's visit haunted me day and night; and especially so when, as each day came round, Father Egan remained out for hours, and little by little I noticed a change in his manner towards me, not that he was cold—no, if anything, he seemed more solicitous for my welfare, and often took up little Helen (whom he had named after my mother) in his arms and kissed her passionately.

One morning, after breakfast, I mentioned that it was my intention to go out on a shopping expedition that might

take some hours, as I intended going to Whiteley's in Bayswater, and I asked Michael if he would go with me.

"I cannot to-day, Marjory," he said, "for I have an important appointment with Father Gallagher."

I was silent for a few minutes, but after the servant had left the room, I said—

"How long is Father Gallagher going to remain in town?"

"Not more than a week or two at the most, I believe," he said.

"I am very glad," I said. "For, ever since he met you that day, I have seen very little of you."

"Well, dear," he answered, looking up at me. "You would not have me treat him otherwise than courteously, when you consider that we have known each other for years?"

"Is he a zealous priest," I asked.

"Yes, indeed," he replied. "Father Gallagher is devoted to our holy religion; his only thought or object in life is to build up our Holy Mother Church, and to gain her many converts from Protestantism."

"I presume," I continued, "your conversation very often is on the topic of religion."

"Mostly always."

And as he said this a cloud passed over his face. Seeing this, I allowed the conversation to drop, and, finishing my breakfast, I rose from the table after asking if he would be home in the evening.

"Yes, Marjory," he answered; and then, as I was about to leave the room, he said, "Come here, little one."

I went to him and stood by his chair. He took my hand and said—

"What have I done, my dear, that you should want to go away without saying good-by as usual?"

"You have done nothing," I answered, trying to choke back the tears that were gathering. "But, oh! Michael, it does not seem as if we were the same to each other ever since you have been associating with Father Gallagher. Tell me, why are you so much with him? Does he know anything, and is he influencing you against"—

"Against what?" he asked.

"Against me."

"Why should you have these fears, Marjory?" he answered, passing his hand caressingly over my hair.

"I cannot tell," I replied. But since the evening I heard he was with you in the parlor an undefinable dread of something has ever been in my heart; and oh, Michael, I could not live if anything came to part us."

"Do not be silly, Marjory," he said. "Remember, I have pledged myself to be true to you. Trust me as you always have done, and that without any fear. So now," he continued, "give me a kiss and go out and do your shopping, and we will spend the evening together at home as we did in the first days."

So I arose and tried to feel satisfied. I was soon ready, and, after leaving orders with nurse about baby,

I set out, intending to take the omnibus for Bayswater. However, after walking a short distance I changed my mind and turned back home. I let myself in with my latch-key, and, going up at once to my room, I took off my outdoor dress, and, exchanging it for a comfortable home wrapper, I went down to the parlor. Father Egan was in the room, seated at the secretary, his back to the door, so that he did not see me enter. I went up softly, thinking to surprise him, and, as I approached nearer, I stood still, FOR LYING ON THE SECRETARY was the crucifix he had worn in his girdle whilst officiating in Father Daly's place at home; and, as he sat there unconscious of all else, with clasped hands and downcast eyes gazing on the emblem of man's salvation with an expression on his face such as I had never seen there before, an awful chill crept over me. It was no longer THE MAN I saw before me, but the PRIEST. Oh, the agony of that moment when, as in a flash, the veil that had so long hid the truth from my eyes was cruelly torn asunder, revealing to me the full horror of my position! A mist gathered around me, my limbs swayed, a cold hand clutched my heart, "OH! GOD, HAVE MERCY!" I cried. Then all became dark and I remembered no more.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHILD OF A PRIEST.

ONE week has passed, and I have been unable to write; one week since I laid down my pen after writing the last chapter, and I have had a bitter struggle against the temptation to leave uncompleted this task of mine; for human nature, so weak, so vacillating, so lacking in moral courage, makes me dread the criticism of those who know me in these years of my life; and ah, fain would I keep within the most sacred recess of my heart the record of my sad early life! Many will blame me; many will say, perhaps, that I knowingly allowed myself to be led into temptation, and that I should have preferred even the isolation of a life within the darkened cloisters of the nunnery to the sacrifice of innocent girlhood and purity at the altar of love. But oh, I have reaped in bitter agony and tears the seed sown in that brief period of happiness! And oh, my sister, you who read this, blame me if you will; but at this moment, looking back to that time, my heart acknowledges it as the greenest, brightest spot in all my otherwise saddened life, and the influence of that voice of other years lives with me still; and in such moments, under this spell, a

sudden yearning comes to my heart, and with it a sense of loss irrevocable and endless.

Oh, how well I remember the day when the arrow of a great life-sorrow pierced my heart, shutting out forever all joy and peace, and turning me from a loving, faithful, trustful girl into a reckless, heartbroken woman. It commenced that morning when I saw Father Egan sitting at the desk lost in contemplation, gazing on the crucifix, and my heart told me that the MAN had sunk his individuality into that of the priest; for the expression on his face that morning could not be well misunderstood, and the knowledge of this well-nigh unbalanced my mind.

He had lifted me up in his arms and carried me to my room, and then, laying me on the bed, did all he could to restore me to consciousness; and, when he had succeeded, I lay there for some time, whilst he sat by my side trying to soothe me. Before he left me to try and sleep after administering an opiate, he promised me again faithfully, and called upon God to witness his vow, that he would never give me cause to regret having trusted him. And so, satisfied for the time being, and under the influence of the opiate, I slept for some hours. When I awoke late in the afternoon, he was seated in an arm-chair by my side; for a few days afterwards he ceased to go out, and again my heart took hope; and I laughed at myself for the fears that I had allowed to overcome me.

It was three weeks after that memorable morning, and I was standing at the parlor window looking anxiously out

and listening for the first sound of his footstep, for he had gone out immediately after breakfast, and it was now past ten o'clock at night. He had said that he would not probably return until six or seven, so that I was not anxious until that hour had passed. But as the clock on the mantel-piece chimed out eight, and then nine and ten, and still there was no sign of his return, fears of every description took possession of me. Once it would be the possibility of an accident, and then I would imagine I saw him all bruised and mangled. Then I remembered that, had such been the case, I would have been notified of the fact, for he always carried his card-case in his pocket, as well as letters, and no difficulty would have been experienced by hospital authorities in sending to the house. Then, when I had dismissed the suggestion, the greatest of all would come, and again the black-robed priest would take the place of the man, and so as a Catholic I endured the agony of hell in my soul.

So the midnight hour came around, and gradually the streets became quiet and forsaken, but still he came not. I watched on by the window until at last the darkest hour before dawn came, and after that morning shadows began to creep in, so I aroused myself and went to my room heart-sick and weary, for I did not want the parlor-maid to find me there in the morning.

When breakfast hour came and nurse knocked at my door, which she always did at that time, bringing baby in with her, I simply called out that I did not wish to be

disturbed. I had no courage to look into the little baby face or listen to her prattle without betraying my emotion before the servant, and so I remained alone. What could I do? Where should I make inquiry? I waited until twelve o'clock, and then, dressing myself and leaving a note for Father Egan, in case he should return before me, I walked to the nearest cab-stand and told the driver to take me to the principal hospitals; and so I spent three or four hours inquiring if any one of Father Egan's description had been treated there. I was kindly and courteously treated, and in some instances met with sympathy and encouragement, and when I had visited the last place I told the driver to take me home. It was nearly six o'clock when at last I reached there, and, after paying the man, I entered the house. Not daring to ask the girl at the door whether he had returned or not, but going into the parlor I found my note where I had left it, and then I knew not how or why but a great calm came over me. I moved and spoke as one in a dream. I sat down without removing my outdoor garments. I had touched nothing to eat or drink, and by-and-by the door opened and nurse entered.

"Please, ma'am, may I not bring you some wine or tea?" she asked.

"No, thank you, nurse," I answered. "Your master will be home by tea-time, and I don't care for anything at present."

But she stood there, and looking up, I said—

"What is it, nurse? Is there anything the matter with

baby?"

"No, ma'am, she replied. "Miss Helen is in the nursery, and the housemaid is with her."

"Then, why do you wait?"

"I hope you won't think me bold, ma'am, but you are looking so tired and ill, I don't think you have had anything to eat, and I am sure if you will only take a glass of wine or a cup of tea you will feel better. May I not bring you something?"

The girl's sympathy touched me, and, thanking her, I told her to make me some tea. She left the room with a smile on her face, and quickly returned with a tray on which were the teapot, with all accompaniments, and some thin bread and butter; she drew a small table to my side, and, pouring out the tea, handed it to me, also the bread. I partook of both, and when I had finished I felt more refreshed.

"And now, ma'am," said the nurse, "may I not bring baby in before I get her ready for bed?"

"No, nurse, I answered, dreading the ordeal. "I am too tired. I will look in at the nursery before going to bed."

She left the room and I remained alone; and as the evening shadows began to gather I felt that if my suspense was not soon ended I should go mad.

At first I thought of sending or going to Father Gallagher, and then, not knowing just what Michael had said to him, I put the thought aside. At last, about eight o'clock

I heard the door-bell ring. I started up, thinking it might be he, but I heard a strange voice in the hall inquiring for me, and, not knowing what to expect, I stood still at the door of the parlor.

Soon I heard the house-maid ascending the stairs, followed by some one, and, stepping inside, I seated myself again in my chair to await her announcement. In a minute afterward she entered, and said :—

“A gentleman to see you, ma’am.”

And before I could answer, the figure of a man entered the room—a man tall and commanding, unmistakably handsome, and dressed as a priest.

“I am Father Gallagher, madam,” he said. “And I have come to see you.”

I had risen from my chair as he approached and announced himself.

Father Gallagher! ah, surely it must have been a chill blast that blew in from the open window, but as he mentioned his name I shivered and a cold perspiration broke out all over me. I motioned him to a chair; and then the same great calm I had experienced the earlier part of the evening on my return home from visiting the hospitals came over me, and I said :

To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?

Father Gallagher looked at me and said :

“Will you not sit down? My visit may be a lengthy one.” At the same time he drew forward the chair I had lately occupied.

I sank into its depths and waited.

"Madam," he said at length, "I came to you at the request of Father Egan."

I did not answer; the cold hand was clutching at my heart, so he continued—

"It will be as well for me to say at once that he has acquainted me with the position of affairs that has hitherto existed between you both."

"Has hitherto existed?" Why did he speak as if it were something of the past and that existed no longer?

"YOU ARE A CATHOLIC, AND I COME TO YOU AS A PRIEST OF OUR HOLY MOTHER CHURCH, A HUMBLE REPRESENTATIVE OF MY MASTER, TO TELL YOU THAT YOU HAVE COMMITTED A GREAT AND SCANDALOUS SIN."

"Where is Father Egan?" I asked. "Why has he not come to see me himself?"

"He is now reconciled to God and the Church," answered the priest, "and will spend some months in a monastery, to which he has been sent to do penance for his sin."

Ah! closer and closer the cold hand clutched my heart. Oh, God! how was it that I could sit there and speak so calmly!

"Did he send me no message?" I asked. And, as I looked up into his face, I felt the chill wave pass through me, but my eyes felt like burning coals; my throat and lips were parched and dry.

"Yes, my child," and the priest seemed to lower his voice, and a look of pity spread over his face.

Ah! surely he could see how I was suffering—every word he said was only a dagger-thrust.

“He sent this message: ‘Tell Marjory that I will ever pray for her. Ask her to forgive me for the sin into which I led her, and beg her, in my name, to become reconciled to the Church.’”

“Is that all?” I asked.

“Yes,” replied Father Gallagher.

“Did he not say one word of his love for me, the promise he had made that he would always be true and faithful to me? Did no word of his child’s future fall from his lips?”

Ah! how my heart waited for the answer.

“When he sent the message by me he had become reconciled to the Church; he spoke only as a priest.

And then all the old passion and fury of my nature, which I had for so long a time subdued, broke forth.

“It is a lie!” I cried, in my rage. “A lie, and you have come here to frighten and make me doubt him.”

“My poor child!” his voice was soft; there was no sign of anger on his face. “Do you think I have come here to torture you? Do you not believe that I know how you must suffer? But I have a duty to perform, a duty painful, but essential to the interests of our holy religion and our priesthood.”

“Ah, yes, ever the Church; all must be put aside where she is concerned,” I cried. “It matters not who suffers, HOW MANY LIVES ARE RUINED, HOW MANY HOMES MADE

DESOLATE, HOW MANY HEARTS ARE BROKEN, SO THAT OUR HOLY RELIGION REAP THE BENEFIT ; and you have a duty, Father ? Perform it ; tell me, inflict on me the full punishment. It will only add one more to the many millions of souls in hell, and condemns one more to a life of misery and wretchedness."

"Do not give way thus, my child. If you will listen to me, I will try to advise you for your good ; remember that your sin has been great , you purchased a transitory happiness at the price of your own and another's soul."

"Tell me, Father Gallagher," I said. "Were you not the cause of his leaving me ? Did not you, when you first discovered the truth as to our position, lead him once more to realize that he was priest as well as man ?"

"Yes, when I knew that he had been false to the vows of his ordination, and that he was a living scandal to Our Holy Mother Church, I advised him and warned him, as a priest, to put aside temptation and return once more to God and his holy vocation."

"Yes ;" I answered, "I knew it was you who came between us. I felt it on the first day when I heard you were in the parlor, and that feeling became intensified as each day he remained in your society. I know the struggle he was passing through ; I feared you and when, three weeks ago, I found him seated there " (pointing to the secretary) "with the crucifix he had worn when first I knew him (and which he had put aside with his cassock and breviary), but now had taken out and was meditating with

it lying before him—I knew then that you had succeeded in awakening him, and that, whilst he might be true to me as a man, yet the priest would overcome the man, and both mother and child would be sacrificed to satisfy the demands of the Church.”

“Nay, you forget that his own soul was in peril; for, had he not fallen in with the offers of grace, had not our Blessed Lady interceded to her Divine Son for him, and thus obtained for him the grace of contrition and a disposition to seek the sacrament of penance, what would have become of his soul?”

“How long was he in making up his mind finally? for, on the morning I saw him with the crucifix, he promised to be true and called upon God to witness his vow.”

“I will own to you,” replied the priest, “that he struggled greatly with temptation, and there was a time when I thought he would not yield; but I prayed for him. I used all my powers to bring him back, and our Blessed Lady be praised, through her intercession the lost one has become reconciled to the bosom of Our Holy Mother Church.”

“And yet,” I said, holding out my left hand, on the marriage-finger of which lay encircled the ring he had placed there, “when he put that ring upon my finger he knew what he was doing; he fully realized the importance of the vow he swore to on his crucifix; and is that vow to be accounted as of no value?”

The Church absolves him from such a sacrilegious vow,

and, as a priest, he was not in a position to make it, and certainly could not keep it."

"And what has the Church to offer me?"

How calm I had once more become! but in those calm moods my anger was worse than when more outwardly aroused.

"My child," said the priest (evidently believing that my calmness was in consequence of anger leaving me), "the Church always has consolation for the one who has strayed away; willingly and lovingly she extends her arms to you, and invites you back again to peace; she opens to you once more the grace of the sacrament of penance."

"And what about my child?"

"It will be tenderly cared for in one of our orphanages, and brought up in our holy religion."

"And supposing I do not want to give up my child, what am I to do? I have no money, except a little in my purse; my friends in Ireland will never receive me, and I would not ask them. What, under these circumstances, would you advise?"

"I cannot believe you would refuse to enter a penitential life, my child," exclaimed Father Gallagher. "It is the safest place for you, and then there would be no necessity for you to seek any employment or the assistance of your friends. Nay," he continued, "I have come to persuade you to leave these apartments to-morrow, and to remain in a place of safety until arrangements can be made for you to enter some such order as will receive you under your

present unhappy circumstances."

"You have never seen my little Helen?" I said, and, rising, I rang the bell, and when the servant answered I requested her to tell the nurse to wrap a shawl around baby and bring her to me.

In a few minutes she entered, and, going to the door, I took my darling in my arms, and carrying her to where Father Gallagher was, I sat down on the chair, and unwrapping the shawl, I said—

"Look, there is the child of your brother priest."

At the sight of my little one as she lay there in her dainty white night-dress, her head covered with golden curls, the long dark eyelashes resting on her cheeks, upon which was the flush of health, a sob rose to my heart.

The priest was visibly affected, and putting forth his hand, he blessed her.

"Has this child been baptized?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"And by whom?"

"Its father," I answered.

And then, fearful lest I should give way, I hastily wrapped the shawl around her, and carrying her to the door gave her back to nurse, after which I returned to my seat, and said to Father Gallagher—

"Now that you have seen her, do you still advise me to enter a penitential life and give my child up to the care of an institution?"

"I see nothing better," he replied, "for there you will

save your own soul and place your child in safety."

"And I would look my last on her face the day I consented to this arrangement? I inquired.

"It would be necessary—nay, it would be a kindness to both of you."

"And she would never know who her parents were, never realize that a mother's arms had folded her within their embrace, that a mother's lips had kissed her as she lay sleeping in all the purity and innocence of her baby life; she would grow up believing both father and mother dead; she would depend upon charity and strangers. Would this not be the case?" I asked him.

"My child, you look at matters in a very exaggerated manner; your child would be the object of the love and solicitude of the sisters who devote their lives to such works of charity."

But I could bear it no longer; an awful anger swept through my heart; I forgot for the mement who it was that addressed me.

"Cease," I cried, "cease your unnatural, your unholy advice; have I not suffered enough in order that the interests of the Church should not be jeopardized? Were not my parents victims to the same heartless system, and did they not intend that my life should be spent within the walls of a convent where, shut out from the sights and sounds of the world, my years would be spent in prayers and acts of self-denial? and did not the promise I made to my mother to carry out her intentions cast a shadow o'er

my girlhood days? and, afterwards, was I not told that there was no other life suitable for me—told by both priests and relations until the very word ‘convent’ became hateful to me? And then, in the midst of this temptation came one in priest’s cassock, and in the name, under the guise of religion, won all the love of my heart, and when, disheartened and looking forward to the miserable life of seclusion to which the Church would condemn me, he came and told me that he cared for me and offered me release from what would have been a living death; so I gave up all and trusted him, then my life was bright because he had learned to love me; when my little one was born, and together we watched her grow, when we, both forgetful of the Church, looked forward to years of happiness—years, when with children around us we would end our days loving and trusting each other, then you came. You, with your insatiate love for the Church; you, who would willingly sacrifice all; you, in whose heart burns no spark of love or sympathy; you, who know no other ambition than that of ecclesiasticism,—you came, and coming brought a curse with you. It was you who estranged us, you who made him believe that he must forsake me, his wife.”

“His wife?” repeated the priest.

“Yes,” I continued. “His wife in the sight of God; and you, with your plausible arguments, made him false to his manhood, false husband, false father, a perjurer, and I curse you from my heart, and not only you, but the Church.”

But Father Gallagher started to his feet, his eyes fairly blazing.

"SILENCE!" he thundered, at the same time holding up his crucifix before me. "Silence! lest the wrath of God fall upon you."

But I was overcome with rage.

"I WILL NOT BE SILENT," I cried, raising my hand, and dashing aside his that held the crucifix. "I WILL NOT BE SILENT. I curse you and the moment you ever entered these doors. It is such as you priests who have made me what I am. Can you give me back my innocence? Can you once more place me amongst honorable women? Can you take off the stain that will forever rest on my life? Can you fill up the void that will forever dwell in my heart? Can you give back to me all which was dearest to me as a woman, and which I sacrificed at the altar of love when hardly more than a girl? No, you cannot. You have come in and robbed me of the ONLY one I had that really loved me, and to-night I swear here, in this room, where the happiest days of my life have been spent, this room which was home to me and him I love, but that your coming to turned into a hell—here I swear that as long as I live I will hate you, and not only you, but all of your cloth."

Once more he stood before me in his wrath, and catching me by the arm, he forced me, through physical strength, into a chair.

"I command you, in the name of the Father, and in the

name of the Son, and in the name of the Holy Ghost to be silent;" and making the sign of the cross before me he fixed his eyes upon mine, and a faintness came over me. Helpless and weak I sat there, completely subdued and with a horrible dread over me. The PRIEST had CONQUERED what the man COULD NOT, for I was still a Catholic.

CHAPTER XII.

A CRUSHED AND BROKEN HEART.

"Not rare on this earth is the love that clings to the thing it has cherished through guilt, through wrong, through misery; but rare, indeed, is the love that still lives while its portion is oblivion and the thing which it has followed passes away to a joy that it cannot share, to a light it cannot behold."

As under some horrible spell, I sat trembling in the chair, with the priest standing before me and all the superstition of my Catholic nature aroused.

"Unhappy girl," at last the priest said, "this is the effect of the sin you have committed. The unrestrained passion of this evening has made you guilty of the sin of sacrilege by raising your hand against God's anointed priest, and endeavouring to dash from his hand the holy emblem of salvation."

I dared not speak. I sat cowering down before him. But at last I burst into a violent storm of sobs. Father Gallagher still stood before me. When I had somewhat

recovered he once more sat down, and, with subdued voice, said—

“ You are in no condition for me to talk to you or advise you. And it will be better for you to retire and try to obtain some rest, and I will return to-morrow morning, when I hope to find you more calm. But before going away I put you under obedience to say nothing about Father Egan, should your nurse ask where he is. Say that he is visiting some friends. And I will give you a draught that will soothe and give you sleep for some hours.”

He stepped to the bell and rang it. The parlour-maid answered, and he requested her to bring some cold water and wine, and to tell the nurse he wished to speak to her. The girl herself being a Catholic, as well as the nurse, of course obeyed him. When the wine and water were brought in Father Gallagher mixed some and gave it to me to drink. Afterwards he called the nurse to him, and, telling her that I had met with a great trouble, requested her to see that after I had retired no one should be allowed to enter my room. And, telling her that he would come back in a few minutes with a draught that would quiet me, he requested her to put me to bed at once. Then, returning to me, he said—

“ Go now, my child, and I will pray to Our Blessed Lady for you, and to-morrow morning I will return.”

Nurse came and assisted me. I was dazed and stupid. Superstition made me fear the priest, whilst at that moment I hated him in my heart as the cause of my present

misery. And so I allowed the nurse to take me up-stairs and assist me to bed. And as I lay down, tired and worn out, she administered the opiate that had arrived, and lowering the gas she sat down. Gradually the influence of the drug began to manifest itself and I sank into a dreamless heavy sleep.

It was past the noon hour before I was able to go down stairs the next day. Father Gallagher had called about ten o'clock, and finding that I still slept he left orders not to disturb me. But, shortly after eleven o'clock, the effects of the opiate had passed off and I awoke—awoke to realise that I was a forsaken woman; that the brightness and joy had forever passed out of my life, leaving me nought but broken promises and sacrificed purity.

Nurse had assisted me to dress and had brought baby to see me, and holding my darling to my heart I allowed my tears to flow. She looked up wonderingly into my face, and, unable to bear the sight of her innocent face any longer—her face that was the living image of my mother's—I gave her back to the nurse. And when she had left the room I fell down on my knees. The thought of prayer came to me, but oh! my mind was too agitated. Oh, how I missed him in whom my life seemed bound up! I could not grasp the thought that he had left me and henceforth I should be alone. Oh, how could I live! how endure my life! Had I seen him lying in his coffin I could have borne it better. It would have been some comfort, though a sad one, to be able to visit the spot where he lay, to carry

a tribute of flowers, to go alone in the hour of sorrow, and, sitting by his last resting-place, to feel that even in death I could talk to him. But now the years would come and go. He and I would be living on the same earth, but we would never again meet, never again clasp hands as we had done, never hear each other's voice. And with this great love in my heart I also pitied him. For, as a Catholic, I could understand the pressure brought to bear upon him by a brother priest. And so, when Father Gallagher was announced, I dried my tears and went down comparatively calm. And as he talked I listened.

"*My child*," he said, "I am glad to see you calmer. Remember, sin always brings with it its companion punishment; but our holy religion has much comfort to give to the repentant sinner, and the sacrament of penance will once more restore you to the bosom of Holy Mother Church. Deeply as you have sinned, still there is hope for you."

"Oh, Father, you do not know the agony I am suffering. My grief, at present, is too deep; it is too fresh for me even to think intelligently."

"The greater then the necessity for you to take advantage of the grace of the sacraments, for they will bring to you strength and courage to overcome this sorrow."

"Yes, I know what you say is true," I replied; "but I cannot meet the conditions necessary in my case to make a good confession."

"The Church asks nothing impossible," answered the priest; "all that she requires of the sinner is a hearty

contrition and a determination to turn away from sin."

"But, Father, I have no contrition. As a Catholic instructed from childhood, I know just how deeply I have sinned against our holy religion, but I cannot acknowledge that I am sorry; for, if Michael came back now, I would brave all, even barter my soul for the joy of having him with me through life."

Involuntarily the priest blessed himself.

"I can make allowances for much you do, my poor child," he replied, "for, in your present condition, I do not think you realise all you say; and the sooner you are removed from your present surroundings the better will it be for you."

"Perhaps it would be," I said, gazing around; and then the remembrance of the many happy days spent in the room overcame me, and, turning to the priest, I continued, "You cannot understand my grief, Father,—you who are so wrapped up in the Church, you who have steeled your heart to every other feeling than the advancement of our holy religion;—you cannot realise what you ask me to yield up in the name of religion. Are you not satisfied with what you have already accomplished? You have separated me from the father of my child, and now you would have me close my heart to all the appeals of mother love, and give up my child into the care of strangers."

"Hush, child! it is not for such as you to speak thus to me. I pity you. Yes, and because I know the circum-

stances that have from childhood surrounded you I pity you the more. You say that you love Michael. Are you willing to prove this by doing that which would make his burden lighter to bear?"

"Can you doubt it, Father?" I replied. "Only prove to me that I can in any way lessen the pain of his position, and at any cost I will do it."

"Last night you refused to entertain the proposition I made that you should enter a Penitential Order, and give up your child," the priest began.

He would have continued, but I interrupted him.

"Oh, Father Gallagher, do not say that the proof you would ask of me is my own isolation in the convent and separation for ever from my child."

The priest looked down.

"This would be the best proof," he said, "and would bring to Michael a great relief."

Oh, how my heart sank!

"Did Michael tell you to ask this sacrifice from me? Take time and answer, Father."

"He did," replied the priest.

"He told you that he wished me to separate myself from baby?" I continued.

"Yes."

"He positively told you this himself?"

"Yes," responded the priest.

I paused. Oh, the agony of that moment! At last a thought came to me,

"Father Gallagher." I said, "I will do as he asks on one condition."

"And what is that?" he asked, looking up.

"It is that you let me see Michael face to face, and hear him say that such is his desire; after that I will not hesitate."

"But he is now under penance," said the priest quickly, "and cannot be seen."

"But, surely, if, as you say, it will lessen the burden of his suffering, to know that I have consented to his wish, there could be no possible objection to his seeing me, so that I, too, might be satisfied."

"It is an impossibility," he said, "even if I were willing."

"Why impossible? I could go to the monastery."

And then a doubt sprang up in my mind.

"Father," I said, "you told me last night that he was in a monastery; where is it located?"

The priest looked at me, and a flush crept over his countenance.

When I made that statement he was in a monastery but he is not there now."

"Where then is he, Father?" and a sudden fear came into my heart.

He answered, slowly and deliberately.

"He left early this morning on a vessel bound for another country. He has been sent away on foreign mission service."

Gone away, abroad ! Then I had been deliberately deceived. I looked at the priest ; I tried to realize just what he said, and, in a pained whisper, I persisted—

“ But you told me he was in a monastery, and at the same time you knew that in a few hours he would leave this land forever.”

“ I did it for the best, my child.”

“ Yes ; oh, yes, you did it for the best ; and for the best you would condemn me to a living tomb ; you would have me false to motherhood. But I know why you had him sent away ; you cannot deceive me.”

“ What do you mean, my child ?”

“ Oh !” I cried ; “ you sent him away because you knew that beneath the cassock of the priest their beat the heart of a MAN, a husband, a father !”

“ And if, as you say, I knew he was more the man and less the priest, was it not my duty to save his soul ? Was he not in your power, and thus not only endangering his salvation, but also bringing scandal on our Church ?”

“ It may be so that it will turn out for the best ; but, Father, I believe that, had Michael not listened to you, he would be by my side to-day ; and though you have separated him and me, though he has returned to his allegiance to the Church, you can never make him forget the days he spent with me. You cannot crush the father-love in his heart ; and in the years to come, when going about his duties as a priest, when little ones from his parish gather round him and he enters the homes of the people to whom

he will minister, when the quiet, peaceful home-scene rises before him, then the man will assert itself, and his heart will turn to the two he loved best on earth."

"Poor child ! poor child ! You have a generous, loving nature ; and if this love you have for a human being—this love so deep and rooted—were only given to the service of our holy religion, how greatly God would be honored ! And since you so truly love Michael, let me tell you that the Church has been very merciful to him, for *no one* but his Bishop and I know of the sin in which he has lived ; and, unless it comes from you, no one ever will ; and thus the Church will be saved from a scandal."

"Then my friends in Ireland know nothing ?" I asked.

"Certainly not. Holy Mother !" he exclaimed, "I would not have your cousin James, whom I have met since first I discovered this, know that Michael has been with you and that you left home with him ; no, not for any consideration !"

"Father," I said, "I promised Michael that I would never divulge to anyone his identity ; and I told him that if anything came to separate us, and if, in the after-years he returned to me wretched, broken-hearted, driven from every refuge, forsaken by all, still I would shelter him with tenderness ; and so, perhaps, some day I may see him—not miserable or forsaken, but as one administering to the spiritual needs of his people."

"But, should such be the case, you would not molest him ? You would not seek him out, and once more be the

one to tempt him to stray away ?”

“No,” I replied ; rather would I seek to shelter him.”

“Promise me, then,” said the priest, “that, if ever you should meet, under no circumstances would you allow yourself to betray him.”

“Yes, Father, I promise you.”

“Swear it on this holy emblem,” he said, holding before me his crucifix.

I did so.

“Remember, if ever you are tempted to break your vow, that the curse of the Church will follow you, and you will have his soul to answer for.”

“Have no fear, Father,” I said ; “I would sooner die than break my vow thus given. I made it as a Catholic, the daughter of a priest and the mother of the child of a priest ; and, as far as there is any relationship between Michael and myself, the Church will never suffer.”

Father Gallagher seemed satisfied. “Now,” he said, “remain here quietly for a few days ; then, when you are stronger, I will talk with you. But I would entreat you to make your confession, become reconciled to God and the Church, and you will yet be a happy woman.”

And he arose to take his leave.

“Father, I am in no disposition to make my confession. Let me try to live down my sorrow in my own way. A crushed and broken heart is not easily mended. But pray for me, that Our Lady may obtain for me the grace of submission.”

CHAPTER XIII.

FOR MY DARLING'S SAKE.

How I lived through the first few days I never knew, but I aroused myself to action when Father Gallagher insisted that I should do as he desired. I had not very much money—something like £30, after I had paid and dismissed the nurse. The parlor-maid was not my servant; and, as Michael had always paid our rent quarterly in advance, and there still remained three weeks to that time, I had no necessity to leave the house at once.

Sorrow, however, and anxiety for my little one's future made me suspicious of Father Gallagher. I determined to leave the house without letting any one know my new destination.

Ah! I did not know how hard and cruel life would be, or how the people of the world would treat me, now that I no longer had any one to protect or care for me. So I arranged for rooms on Seven Sisters Road, Holloway, where I thought I would not be known; and, packing up my trunks, I had them called for and left at the Great Eastern Dépôt, thinking thus to evade Father Gallagher.

One evening, just three or four days previously to the expiration of the quarter, I entered the cab I had sent for, and after saying good-bye to the place that had been home

to me, I requested to be driven to the Great Eastern. Earlier in the day I had been to the station, and calling for my trunks had them forwarded to my new apartments. I thought it better to go to the station in the cab.

I remained in the waiting-room for an hour, and then stepping out walked down a couple of streets, until I came to a cab-stand, and entering one was driven to my rooms.

And now life commenced for me in earnest. The lady from whom I hired the rooms took for granted that I was a widow, and had lost my home as well as husband. For the first week or two I did not stir out of doors lest I should meet Father Gallagher. I feared no one else, for I had made no acquaintances—and then I saw that confinement to the house made little Helen fretful and cross. So, little by little, I began to take her out, first only a short distance ; then, as time went on, I ventured further, and as it was warm weather I would often take her for a ride on the tram-car in the cool evening air. Soon another dread came to me—my little stock of money was dwindling down, and I had no prospect of getting any more—so I economized as well as I could.

Oh ! how lonely I was in that great city of London with its teeming millions ; and yet there I stood, friendless and alone !

One Sunday evening I felt a desire to go to church, and asking the landlady of the house if she would mind baby for an hour, to which she very willingly consented, I put on my bonnet and veil, for I dressed in mourning, and hav-

ing ascertained where the nearest church was, I turned my steps in that direction. When I arrived, vespers were over and the benediction service had begun. The church was very full, but the usher found me a seat quite near the altar. It was the first time I had attended church since leaving home, and as I heard the *Tantum Ergo* it took me back to the last May evening I had attended church at home, when Michael officiated, and the bitter tears forced their way. Where was he at that moment? Was he, too, officiating at a similar service? Did he ever think of those he had left behind? Ah! he was reconciled to God.

I still stood outside the pale of the Church, and day and night I was haunted with dread, and yet unwilling to go to confession—although I believed at that time that had I died without becoming reconciled, through the sacrament of penance, to God, my soul would be damned for all eternity, and Father Gallagher's form often came before me; when I remembered that I had struck down his hand as he held the crucifix, it seemed that for me there was no, hope, no forgiveness, no Heaven. As I arose after benediction, and left the church, so this dread grew upon me.

But why linger over those days? Oh, my friends, you who are reading these lines, forgive me, if I say that there are some sorrows we cannot tell to any one, and you know not the pain I endure these days whilst writing this sad experience of my life; for in memory I have to go back, and oh! the wounds that I thought time had healed still lie open. Remember, when you judge me, that I had been

left without a mother's care just when I most needed it, and that my sin was not because I loved sin, but because, as a woman, I loved the one for whom I gave up all; and when you condemn the sin do not forget the suffering.

So days and weeks passed by, and my money was gone, and then, oh, then, I began to realize just what poverty meant. I moved from one set of apartments to another; gradually I lost my wearing-apparel. Baby Helen became sick. I had looked for something to do, but who would give me anything; I had neither experience nor references; my dress was shabby, and often I knew what hunger meant.

I knew that I only had to go to Father Gallagher and he would help me, but I knew also that he would ask me to part with baby; and, oh, if I had dreaded the parting when he first asked me, I did more so now, for she was *all* I had, and she had grown so thin, so weak! Consumption had laid its fatal clutch upon her, and I saw her gradually fading away.

At last, oh, how can I tell it? God give me strength! The last penny was gone. I had nothing I could part with; and so, with my little one in my arms moaning, I walked about the streets. Oh! the agony that pierced my heart as the tiny, weak arms clung with baby fondness round my neck, and the tiny head, with its golden rings, was pressed tightly to my arms! and through the poor, parched lips issued the feeble moan of hunger, and I saw her thus lying in my arms, dying—yes, dying—because I

could give her no food ; the desperation of grief took possession of me, and I took money that was another's. Yes, I became a thief—but not a thief in the true acceptation of the word—in act, through great temptation, forgetful of the consequences, and to save my child.

But, so unused was I to crime, that before many hours were over the police had arrested me, and my baby was taken from my arms. All that night, as I lay in the police cell, I thought of nothing but my child. The officers treated me with every kindness ; they seemed to pity me, and I remember how the inspector came to me, and persuaded me to drink some coffee. They did not place me with any one else, but by myself. The next morning they led me to the Mansion House ; and, as I sat there in the crowd, it seemed as if all eyes were upon me. As in a dream I heard them talk. I do not to this day remember what they said, except some one asked me if I was guilty of the charge, and I said “ Yes ; ” but all the time I kept asking for my baby, and then—it seemed to me such a long time—one of the officers said, “ Come with me.”

My limbs were giving way and a mist was gathering. Then he gave me his arm, and supported me down stairs, and three or four more of the officials gathered around me. They spoke to me words of sympathy, and then by and by I was taken to the Old Bailey to await trial. It was horrible, horrible to have a door closed upon me, and to hear the dreadful rattling of keys. But I look back to-night, and I remember with gratitude the kindness and

courtesy of the Governor, Mr. Sidney Smith, and I have always felt grateful to him.

At last the day arrived for the trial, and I was placed then in the prisoners' dock; and when the trial came on the police gave their evidence. I was weak; no word had been brought to me about baby, and my heart was hungering to know something. So the trial proceeded. Ah, how distinctly I remember it all!—the judge sitting in his high chair, the lawyers at a table just under him, then the jury on the right-hand side, and the crowd of curious listeners. Two matrons were seated with me.

Then the judge turned around to the policeman and asked: "Where is the child now?"

The policeman looked at me. Oh, how eagerly I strained forth to hear his reply. It came:—

"Your honor, the child is dead!"

Dead! Oh, God, did I hear aright? What was the matter with me? What were all these people about? Oh, shall I ever forget it? Something was said, but I could not give way.

"Dead! my baby dead! My little, suffering baby Helen, and I was not near her!"

From the depths of a broken heart I cried out, "Oh, my baby! my baby! let me go to her!"

And then came darkness.

.

They told me afterwards that I had fainted and had been carried out of court; that I had been found guilty,

but had been strongly recommended to mercy, and the judge had deferred sentence until the next Old Bailey Sessions, which would be held one month later. And I lay on the bed in the cell, not wishing to speak to any one. The governor came up to see me, but oh! I was in too much grief to listen to him.

“Would I like to see the clergyman?” he asked.

I replied “No.” I only wanted to be alone—alone where no eye could witness my grief. They were both gone now, my loved ones, and I was alone.

Oh, mothers! you who read this—you who have lost little bright-eyed darlings! You know something of the pang I suffered, but *my* suffering was keener. When your little one was ill, you had the consolation of tending her. You watched by her little cot, you procured for her all the nourishment she needed; and at last, when the tired little eyes were forever closed, your mother-hands clad the little form in its death-robe, and surrounded by friends you accompanied it to its last resting-place; and you can go in the cool summer evenings, and take with you a little flower to lay upon her grave.

But mine,—ah! mine is a grief that lies in my heart to-night as fresh as ever; for, when my darling began fading away, I had no home, no one to whom I could go. I had to hold her in my arms and listen to the low moan of pain without being able to procure for her any nourishment. I did all I could; night after night my weary, tired limbs walked the floor with her in my arms; and oh!

how we loved each other, baby and I. And then, when the end came—when the baby-eyes closed forever, and the weary little body lay still in death, it was strangers' hands that robed her, and clasped the tiny fingers;—it was strangers who gazed their last on the face that had so often brightened with the smile of joyful recognition when I approached;—and strangers smoothed down the rings of golden hair, and then carried the little form of my darling to its last home, and I was never told. I feel, as I write to-night, with the tears gathering in my eyes, that she wanted me; and I know, better than any one can tell me, that, though she could not speak, yet she missed me; and oh, how often her baby eyes wandered around in search of me! Oh, baby! baby Helen, my darling! not one day in all these years have you been absent from my heart. I know not, my treasure, where your body lies; but I do know your soul is in that land where no sin or sorrow can ever enter; and when God sent his messengers to bear you away He did it for the best.

Many blame me and say I am a wicked woman. They point out to this period of my life's history and call me a criminal. They never seek to know the circumstances. But HE, against whom I ALONE have SINNED—He long, long ago pitied me; and, when the hour comes and my soul stands before Him, He will be more merciful to me than my own sex has been.

.
“You have been found guilty; but the jury having

recommended you to mercy, and the court having inquired into the circumstances that led you to commit the crime for which you have been tried, your sentence, therefore, is as lenient as the law allows. You are sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and the month that has passed during which time you waited for your sentence will be counted as one month."

So said Judge Hawkins when, a month later, I was brought before him to be sentenced; and the governor told me that I had been very leniently dealt with.

I was removed from the Old Bailey and sent to the Woman's Prison in London—Tothill Field I think it was called,—and I found a great deal of difference between the officials there and those at the Old Bailey.

I had been asked whether I was a Protestant or a Catholic, and I answered the former. I thought by doing this that there would be no fear of meeting a priest. The next morning I was told to follow one of the officers, and she took me into a room where I saw the Church of England minister, Rev. Mr. Merrick. He had been attached to the prison for some years, and consequently knew that I had never been there before. Oh! the shame and sorrow I endured at the thought that I was now socially and morally on a level with some of the worst types of female criminals. I could not look any one in the face.

Mr. Merrick was my friend; he bade me take courage, and told me, if I so desired, that he would arrange to have

me cared for in some home when the time came for me to be released. He gave me books to read. I did not tell him much, only that I had not been married by the law of the land. When he asked me where the baby's father was, I said I didn't know.

They put me to needlework ; and, as time went on, and, at last, my release was near at hand, Mr. Merrick told me that he had arranged for me to be received into St. James' Home at Fulham—an institution on the same principle as a Catholic Home, and under the supervision of the Cleiver Sisters. So when, at last, the hour arrived, and I was taken away to put on my own clothes, Mr. Merrick arranged for one of the female warders to go with me to Fulham, and that afternoon I was received into the home.

At first, when I was introduced to the lady they called the Sister Superior (her name was Sister Lucy), and I saw before me a lady dressed in a garb that somewhat resembled that of a Catholic nun, I thought I was in a Catholic institution ; but a few moments' conversation soon disabused my mind of this fact, as well as a more close scrutiny of her dress. She, of course, did not know that I was a Catholic. Sister Lucy was a bright, energetic, warm-hearted, generous, sympathising woman, and it was impossible not to like her.

The home in Fulham takes three classes of inmates. There is one class whose friends can afford to pay handsomely for their comfort, and this class is always addressed with the prefix Madame—as, for instance, Madame Mary,

Madame Louise.

Then the next are young girls and women for whom, I believe, either eleven or seventeen shillings (but of this I am not quite sure) are paid. This class are simply addressed by their Christian names. They take their meals in the same dining-room as do the first class, except that their tables are separate. The food, however, is the same; both wear the same color dresses—dark bottle-green home-spuns and cashmeres; and both do needlework.

The third class are entirely separated; they are girls from the working classes—such as servants, seamstresses, etc. They have their own dining-room, dress in plain prints and cottons, and do all the housework as well as wait on table, both for the sisters and for the first two classes.

Sister Lucy said that I should be with the second class, and introduced me to Sister Cassie, who conducted me to the dormitory and gave me a dark green dress to wear, after which she made me go into the dining-room and brought me a nice luncheon on a tray covered with a snowy napkin. I could eat nothing, but gladly drank the cup of refreshing tea.

After this she led the way to what she called the classroom, where at a table I saw about fourteen or eighteen young ladies seated, all engaged on fine needlework. A lady, dressed somewhat like Sister Lucy, sat at the head of the table, to whom Sister Cassie introduced me, calling her at the same time Sister Arabella. I was then given a chair, and asked by one of the young ladies, whose name I

afterwards discovered was Miriam, whether I could sew. On replying in the affirmative she handed me a needle and thimble, and gave me a piece of work. But by this time I had begun to wonder what sort of a place it was. Were they Catholics? No; for, though they wore a habit and called each other "sister," and also wore a silver cross on their breast and rosary beads at their side, still, as a Catholic, I knew that they did not belong to that Church. However, I had not been very long in the room—probably less than an hour—when a message came that the Sister Superior wished to see me, and Sister Arabella telling me I was at liberty to go, I followed the messenger, who took me into the Superior's room. Sister Lucy asked me if I would like to see the "FATHER."

I hesitated, and she said, "Of course, you are not compelled to do so; but we always like all the inmates to see him as speedily as possible after their arrival. But if you prefer waiting a few days more, you have only to say so."

"Thank you, madame," I replied: "with your permission I would prefer waiting. I do not feel sufficiently composed to speak to him to-day. Later on I hope to avail myself of his advice."

"Very well, and I hope you will try to make yourself happy. You may find it hard at first to accommodate yourself to the rules of the house; but after a few days you will find it will be much pleasanter."

That evening, after supper, the young ladies gathered around me and tried to make the hour pleasant; and when

the bell rang, and we went into church, I noticed as each entered that she dipped her finger into a stoop which contained what I supposed to be holy water, and made a sign of the cross and also a genuflexion. But on entering the body of the church I saw at once that I was not in a Catholic church. No red light was displayed in honor of the Real Presence, and the altar arrangements were somewhat different.

The Sisters with the black veils all entered and occupied pews at the side of the church, and when the service commenced it was all a mystery to me. I heard them reciting in English some of the psalms; then they sang the *Nunc Dimittis*, and retired, each bowing to the altar before leaving the church.

Then we all went to our dormitories. Each had a cubicle or a room built up with wooden partitions, and closed with a door that the Sister locked from outside after she had put out the gas.

As I lay in bed that night, I wondered what would be my future. I felt certain I could not remain in this institution; for, whilst everything was very nice, and we were treated with the greatest courtesy, yet it appeared to me as if I were in some place which was only a parody on the Church of Rome. And ever and anon the moan of my baby would sound within my ear. I had changed. That horrible experience of being herded with criminals had caused me to lose my self-respect. I shrank from coming in contact with anyone; and, try as I might, yet the moan came, and at times almost drove me mad.

CHAPTER XIV.

TO FORGIVE AND TO FORGET.

I did not remain many weeks at Fulham. Life had become to me almost an unbearable burden. Sleeping or waking, the past was ever before me, and with it the pale, suffering face of my dead child. The sisters were kindness itself, especially so Sister Lucy, the Superior. But all my surroundings (for the Ritualists, whilst not professing to be Romanists, yet do not hesitate to copy them as much as possible, both as regards dress and ritual) only brought my sorrow more prominently to my mind; and so, rejecting the advice of Sister Lucy and others to remain in the institution, I one morning bade them good-by, and once more found myself thrown on the world.

I had a little money. With this I paid in advance for a furnished room, and succeeded in a few days in obtaining a position as seamstress to a dressmaker. When work-hours were over, I used to sit in my lonely room evening after evening, with no other companion than the memories of the past. Vainly I endeavored to forget, or to close my ears to the memory of the painful moan that had issued from the lips of my poor, suffering child; but wheresoever I went, or howsoever I was engaged, it was present with me. At last, driven beyond endurance, longing for rest, I

MY LIFE IN THE CONVENT.

was one evening tempted to take some morphine. Alas! it was the most fatal thing I could have done; for that one dose, taken with the desire only to obtain forgetfulness for a few hours, was the means of causing me to habituate myself to the deadly drug.

One day, feeling unable to go to work, I remained home. I was sitting by the window of my room when I heard a gentle knock at the door, and on opening it I found myself confronted by two Roman Catholic Sisters. I invited them to enter, which they did, and taking the chairs I offered, they informed me that they were visiting the neighborhood, inquiring for children who were not attending school, and were also soliciting contributions in aid of their work. I took out my purse and gave a shilling—more, in one sense, than I could very well afford.

After a few other remarks, one of the Sisters asked me if I were not a Catholic.

I replied, "I am nothing."

"What were your parents?" the Sister asked.

"Catholics," I answered.

"And were you not instructed in your catechism?" again inquired the Sister.

"Certainly," I replied; I received a very careful education. My mother was a most devout Catholic, and took special pains to bring me under the influence of the Church."

"Then how can you say you are nothing?"

"Simply," I responded, "because I have been deceived

and cruelly wronged by those of the Catholic religion who have set me a better example. But," I continued, "you will pardon me if I say that this is a very painful subject, and one that I prefer not discussing with ANY ONE."

"I am very sorry, my child, to find you in such a disposition," she said, in a soft voice, "and I am sure, if only you were to seek the advice of a priest, you would feel benefited. Will you allow me to send one to you?"

"No," I answered; "I thank you for your interest, but I never wish to speak to one again. I have no faith in them. The darkest pages of my life's history are associated with them. I hate them."

The Sister looked at me in consternation, and, as I finished, she crossed herself.

"Surely," she said, "you do not realise what you are saying?"

"Yes, I do, Sister," I replied; "but no doubt I shock you. Well, if you knew the circumstances you would not feel quite so shocked. However, we will not continue a discussion that is unpleasant to both you and me."

A few minutes more, and the Sisters arose to take their leave. I accompanied them to the hall door, and, as they were passing out, the same Sister who had addressed me in the room turned round and said—

"*SHOULD you ever require advice or a friend, come to our convent.*"

I thanked her, at the same time saying that a convent would be the last place to which I would go if in need of

aid or advice.

One Saturday afternoon I was walking over the Holborn viaduct towards Meekin's store, to make a few small purchases. I noticed a crowd gathering at the end of the viaduct, and not wishing to be detained, I attempted to cross over on the other side, and in so doing I was jostled about by the passengers who were hurrying by. Suddenly I felt a hand laid on my arm, and looking up I saw Father Gallagher.

"I have been looking for you," he said, "come with me, so that I may speak to you."

My surprise at meeting him there was so great that I was unable to speak, and I allowed him to lead me on to the sidewalk.

"Is there any place where we can go, so that I may speak with you?" he said, as I stood by his side.

By this time I had somewhat recovered from my surprise, and said—

"I do not wish to have anything to say to you, Father Gallagher."

"Perhaps not," replied the priest; "but, nevertheless, I have a desire to talk with you. And if you allow me, I will walk with you to your home, for I think I may be the means of doing you some good."

I hesitated for a moment. Then the thought entered my mind that he might have something to say about Father Egan, and this prompted me to say—

"If you do not mind the distance, you can accompany

me to my apartments, but it will be impossible to walk there."

"Very well, then ; we'll take the next omnibus."

In a few minutes the omnibus we were waiting for came up ; and, hailing it, I entered, followed closely by Father Gallagher.

When we arrived at my apartments I ushered him in, and said : "I regret, Father, that I have not a better place to bring you to, but my circumstances will not permit me to indulge in the luxury of handsome apartments."

"There is no necessity, my child, for you to make any excuses," responded the priest. "I am very glad to have met you, for I have spent many anxious hours on your account ; and now," he continued, "tell me why you have hidden yourself away from those who wished to befriend you."

"I answered : "Simply because I wished to."

"Where is baby Helen ?" he asked.

I replied : "Where the cruelty of the Church has sent her—in her grave."

"Then you have passed through much suffering, and this accounts for the great change in your appearance ; indeed, I hardly recognised you in the viaduct, and had to look several times before speaking to you."

"Yes," I answered, "I am changed ; so changed, indeed, that were my mother living she would not know me ; she would not recognise in this wreck the child whom she had so dearly loved."

“Marjory,” said Father Gallagher, “I have never forgotten you in my prayers, never ceased to remember you during the sacrifice of the Mass, and have searched for you; and, at times, have almost dreaded to think of the many temptations that would surround you. Now, my child, that I have found you, I am unwilling to allow you to pass on again without endeavoring to persuade you to take the only course that will bring you peace.”

“And that course?” I inquired, almost certain what his reply would be.

“Is to become once more reconciled,” he answered, “to God and the Church; and to place yourself under the protection of Our Blessed Lady and those who have your interest at heart. Come back, child, to the bosom of the Church; and, like a true mother, she will receive you, and through the sacraments pour balm upon your wounded heart.”

The priest spoke in subdued tones and voice expressive of sympathy, and I was deeply touched. The old influence was creeping over me and appealing to all my old love and veneration for the Church. And so, bitterly though I had suffered, I was still a Catholic, a Catholic at heart, with a Catholic consciousness that, never mind how deeply I had sinned, yet in the PRIEST, aside from the MAN, I was in the presence of a friend, one to whom I could lay bare the most secret chambers of my heart, one whose knowledge of frail human nature would enable him to understand me, and whose holy vocation would enable

him to give me advice.

So, under this influence, and in the room that had so often witnessed my sorrow, where I had spent so many weary hours, had shed so many tears, I, in deep anguish, yearning for sympathy, tired and weary of life's battle, fell down at his feet and cried out, "OH, SOGARTH AROON ! SOGARTH AROON ! I am so miserable ! my heart will break ! oh, help me to do right !"

And, as weak as a helpless child clinging to its mother, so I clung to him, all the Catholic of my nature aroused ; and, as I knelt there, I told him all the sorrow and sadness of my life from my early girlhood up to that present time. Patiently he listened to me, only interrupting me now and then to ask some question ; and, when I had finished, he said—

"Poor child ! you have indeed suffered. But, had you sent for me or any other priest at the time when you were taken before the magistrates, you would have been saved the humiliation of going amongst criminals."

"Oh, Father ? don't ! don't, for God's sake, place me on an equality with them," I cried. "There have been times I almost cursed the hour I was born when I realize that I have been the inmate of a police cell."

"Nay, child," he answered, "yours was an extreme case of necessity ; and whilst you made yourself amenable to the laws of the country, yet in God's sight you were not a criminal."

"Yes, Father ; but the world at large will not under-

stand this, and I stand to-day dishonored."

"You did wrong, my child, in saying you were a Protestant when you went to that Home in Fulham; you placed yourself in great temptation; but God and Our Blessed Lady have preserved you; and now, my child, why not put away from your mind all the past, both its sorrows and headaches, and follow the blessed example of such holy penitents as St. Mary Magdalen, St. Theis, and others, who by a life of mortification and prayer made reparation for their past and were bright examples of penitence? You are young, and there is much you can do to prove your sorrow and to save your soul; and surely within the quiet hush of a religious vocation, closed in from the sights and sounds of the world, with the aid and grace of the sacraments, surrounded by all holy influences, you may yet find much to bring peace to your soul."

"I cannot, Father," I replied; "the monotony of such a life would drive me insane."

"This is only a temptation from the enemy of your soul, who would, if possible, still retain power over you."

"I have tried, Father, to make myself believe that it would be better for me; but in vain. I look into the past; I see myself a young girl, innocent, confiding, trustful; suffering first in consequence of a parent's sin; then, the ordinary pleasures of young womanhood denied to me, I am told that my days must be spent within the walls of a convent. My nature revolts against such a life, and yet I try to become reconciled to the thought. My heart is

torn between my desire to keep my promise to a dying mother, in the interests of our holy religion, and my utter abhorrence of conventual life. I sought for aid from one who had been ordained a priest of the Church, and who, unconsciously to myself, had won my deepest affection. He, knowing this, took advantage of my girlish weakness. He had an opportunity, in his position as confessor, to acquaint himself with the weak and strong points of my character, and used the power thus gained to further his own plans and my ultimate ruin. No pity for my orphaned condition, my youth, or helplessness, entered his heart. I was sacrificed. I gave up name, and home, and friends ; I broke my vow to my dead mother ; I turned away from the sacrifices of the Church. I gave up ALL that would make life worth living for, and so for a short time lived in a fool's paradise. I tasted the sweets of maternal love—a little form, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, cradled her head on my breast ; soft baby hands clung to my neck ; and, forgetful of everything else, I looked forward to a future of joy and happiness spent with my loved ones. I awoke one day to find myself deserted, my hopes crushed once again ; not only am I, but so also is my child, sacrificed to the interests of the Church ; and when you, Father, came to me that night in Bryanstone Square, I, forgetful of all, raised my hand against you, an anointed priest."

The priest raised his hand as if to check me.

"Do not stop me !" I cried ; "I must speak, for the sacrilegious act of that moment has haunted me ever since.

You offered me a shelter in a penitential institution, and insisted on the separation from my child ; and so I turned my back and fled, changing my name, endeavouring to hide from you so that I might keep my child. I have known what it is to be cold and hungry, and to hear my child's moan of hunger and pain at she lay in my arms ; and unable to obtain for her relief I became a thief—I took money that did not belong to me, though not a thief in heart—and so I fell into the hands of the law. My child was taken away ; she died and was buried by strangers, whilst I lay within the cell of a prison ; and *now* you find me—find me, oh God ! broken-hearted, wrecked, childless, alone—and all you can offer me is a life of seclusion, a life so associated with ecclesiasticism that, instead of helping me, will only bring my past suffering more acutely before me. I tell you, Father, I would rather commit suicide, and thus end my suffering.”

While speaking, I had risen to my feet, and now stood facing the priest. He raised his eyes to my face and said—

“It is wicked in you to indulge in such thoughts ; your life belongs to God, and you would not only cut yourself from the world by taking it, but your soul would spend an eternity in Hell. There can no peace come to you until you are reconciled to God—until you learn to forget the past.”

“Forget it !” I, exclaimed ; how can I do so ? Has it occurred to you, Father, to think what that would mean ?

I should have to cut out of my life, as if it never had been, all that has occurred up to this time. I must efface the memory of one who, as a priest, led me into sin; of the suffering face of my dead child, whose last resting-place is unknown to me; of my long hours of bitterness as an inmate of a prison cell. I must make myself into a new creature, and not keep even the recollection of my existence since the morning I said good-by to my cousin Elizabeth. *This* is what forgetfulness of the past would mean to me. Judge, therefore, whether or not I am likely to forget it."

All the passion of my nature was manifest in my voice, and the priest looked at me with deep sympathy as he said—

"Perhaps I was wrong to use the expression; it is not in our power to forget; but there is another thing in our power, and that is—to forgive."

I remained silent for a few moments, battling within myself. The priest had shown me that I had not yet forgiven the one to whom I attributed all my sorrow.

"Father," I said, "you say what is true; it is ours to forgive if we will; but very often it is hard to make ourselves willing, especially if the wrong suffered is deep."

"Quite true, my child; but remember Our Blessed Lord himself taught us the divine grace of forgiveness; and surely no one suffered more than he at the hands of enemies, and also from those upon whom, in past times, He had conferred many favors; and he it is who taught us to say, 'Forgive us our trespasses.'"

The passion had died out of my heart; the bitterness was passed; the influence of the priest's voice once more recalled to my help my better nature.

"Father," I asked, "where is Michael? Do you ever hear from him?"

"I have on several occasions," he replied.

"And does he ever mention me? does he ever refer to the past?"

Once more the priest looked at me pityingly.

"No, *my child*," he answered; "your name is never mentioned."

Oh, how the words pierced my heart! My poor, weak woman's nature longed to hear I was not quite forgotten.

"You must remember that the good father is once more carrying out the duties of his holy calling, and he is spending his life in his Master's service. He will not again be weak enough to fall, and the sacraments of our Holy Church enable him to overcome temptation."

As the priest spoke, the picture of Father Egan once more reconciled to the Church and working as a priest came before me. Now he seemed forever out of my reach. The *man* was dead; the *priest* alone lived; and henceforth I would have to acknowledge that a gulf deep and impassable was between us. And, as I sat with bowed head Father Gallagher said—

"Let your better and nobler self assert itself, and you will feel happier. I will leave you now, and here is my address" (laying down his card on the table). "Pray

for grace to aid you ; seek the intercession of the Mother of God, and I will come again to see you."

He passed out of the room and down the stairs, leaving me alone, and as I lay with my head on the table I once more sobbed long and bitterly. He was lost to me forever, and as the shadows gathered around in the little humble room I fought out the battle within my heart, and the influence of an unseen presence surrounded me ; soft hands seemed clinging to my neck, and sweet baby eyes were looking into mine, and a little mouth seemed pressing mine with kisses as the voiced lisped " Mamma."

There was no suffering in that face, no sound of pain audible in the voice that came to me. And, under this influence, came a great pity in my heart for Father Egan. Clasp ing my hands, I knelt down beside my chair ; then for some time I sobbed convulsively.

When my sobs had ceased I arose. I had FORGIVEN HIM ; but in my heart I could not forgive the system that had condemned two lives to misery and wretchedness. I determined to see Father Gallagher no more if I could possibly avoid it ; and, in order to carry out this object, early on Monday morning I told my landlady that I should not require the rooms any longer and would send for my trunk.

CHAPTER XV.

MY GREAT MISTAKE.

SOME people say that it is a very common thing for every woman to consider herself good-looking. However true or false this may be, I certainly at the time of which I write did not share in this weakness. My life had been one of sorrow, and my heart had been so wrapped up in the two I had loved and lost that I had no time or thought for anything else.

One morning on taking up the *Daily Chronicle*, a London newspaper, I noticed among the advertisements one that offered unusual advantages to any person who would desire to cultivate the voice for the theatrical profession. For a long time I studied the advertisement, and at last made up my mind that I would call at the address given. If I remember correctly, the name of the person advertising was either Chalmers or Chambers. I presented myself that evening at the door, and was ushered into a sitting-room already occupied by several young women who, I suppose, had called on the same errand as myself. One by one they were asked into another room, just as patients waiting for their turn at a physician's office. At last, having been there nearly an hour, I too was shown into the inner room, and I saw a gentleman who introduced himself as the advertiser. I told him I had called in consequence of his advertisement.

He asked me if I had ever had any experience in the theatrical profession.

"NONE WHATEVER," I answered. "I have come to you because I understand from your advertisement that you are willing to educate, and, where proficient, obtain positions for your pupils in theatrical companies."

"My fee is ten shillings in advance ; and after you have paid this I will try your voice and tell you whether there is any use in your studying."

I had a little money I had been saving up—not very much, only three sovereigns—and opening my purse, handed him one, for which he returned change. He then walked up to a piano and asked me to sing the scales. I did so, and afterwards, finding I knew "HOME, SWEET HOME," desired me to sing one verse. Having complied, he turned to me and said—

"You have naturally a very fine soprano voice, but it will require training."

Leaving the piano, he took up a book asked me to read. It was a copy of Campbell, and the poem he chose for me was "AN ELEGY ON LOVE AND MADNESS."

When I had finished he said—"I believe you have much latent dramatic ability, and shall be glad to accept you as a pupil. Come to me twice weekly for one hour. I will expect you to give me half of your first month's salary when I obtain for you a position."

He then gave me a book—the play of "The Hunchback"—and told me to study the part of "JULIA." I

carried out all the instructions I received as far as it lay in my power. I carefully studied the part; was prompt in my attendance twice a week; and, as the lessons were given in the evening, I was able to continue my needlework during the day.

At the end of a few weeks, my teacher told me that he had succeeded in obtaining a position for me as general utility at thirty shillings per week. He thought I had better accept the position. It was with a company that would be leaving London in two weeks for a tour in the provinces. I talked matters over with him, and finally concluded to do what he advised. He gave me a letter of introduction to the manager of the company in question, requesting me to present it the next morning at 11 o'clock at Blackmore's Theatrical Agency. So at the appointed time I called, and presented my letter to the clerk, who asked me to take a seat, as the gentleman to whom it was addressed would be at the office very soon.

This was the first time I had ever been in such a place. There were photographs—by the hundred, I think—adorning the walls of actors and actresses. A constant stream of professionals were coming in and going out. At last, a portly-looking man, with very pronounced jewelry and dress, came in, and, as soon as the clerk recognised him, he came up to me, saying at the same time, as he presented him to me, "This is the gentleman you desire to see." I acknowledged the introduction, at the same time presenting my letter

I noticed that whilst reading it he looked at me once or twice.

Having finished it, he said, " Well, young lady, I am willing to give you a trial. My company will leave town in two weeks. We are going to take around ' East Lynne,' and I want some one to take the part of ' JOYCE.' If you come to the stage door of the Prince of Wales Theatre to-morrow at ten o'clock, you will have your part given to you and be put through your first rehearsal; but you must sign this agreement first."

He handed me a printed form. I glanced over it. The gentleman told me it was customary for all persons making a contract in the profession to sign just such a document. So having put my signature to it, he, in return, gave me a similar document with his, and I left the "agency."

I attended the rehearsal, was introduced to the ladies and gentlemen of the company, and when I became acquainted with some of the former they very kindly told me just what articles of wardrobe would be necessary for me to carry, as well as giving me other valuable advice.

I became quite interested in my own part of the play. We went to various towns, and, after two or three weeks, the lady who had taken the part of " Barbara Hare " became ill, and I was given her position. There was much in this style of life that I found disagreeable, yet I met with much kindness from many members of the company.

Sometimes we would remain only one day in a town; in others, perhaps, a week. I received good press notices, and

think that, had I continued in this line of life I might have made a passably good actress, but I did not put my whole heart in the work.

It was during this time, and when we had returned to London, that I met Captain R. Parkyn, of Finsbury House, Cornwall. He represented himself as a man possessing much property in mines, etc., in the vicinity of St. Anstell and St. Colomb. After a brief acquaintance with him he made me proposals of marriage.

I was not in any way attached to him. I told him so, but I preferred home-life. He told me he would endeavor to make me happy, and that his parents would receive me with affection. So, thinking it the best thing I could do, and that it would forever separate me from the past, I consented. He went to Cornwall, and I followed him as soon as I had made all my arrangements, and was married to him in the Episcopal church in St. Anstell in 1881. He took me home and introduced me to his family. They received me, and I made my home with them for a few weeks. I soon found, however, that I had made a great mistake.

It seems that Captain Dick, as he was called by every one, had told the people that he had married a lady of means and position. The few families that lived near called, and we were invited out. Curiosity is as rife in England as it is in any other part of the world; but never did I see it so exemplified as in the little village in Cornwall.

Mrs. Captain Tom Parkyn, my husband's mother, had, it seemed, taken great exceptions to the marriage, and I suffered much in consequence. My husband had not courage enough to stand by me. I became very ill; the doctor who was in attendance ordered me morphine to soothe the intense pain I was suffering. When I got a little better I told Captain Dick that he would have to get me a home in another house. We went up to London for a short time, and then I found out the true character of the man I had married, but I could not undo the marriage-tie.

We returned to Cornwall one Saturday morning. He gave me a note that I thought was some sort of cheque, and desired me to purchase whatever I wanted to furnish a house, as he had made arrangements to rent a residence a couple of miles from his mother's home. I did as he requested, and paid for the goods by giving the (as I supposed) genuine cheque. Fortunately, I had received no money in exchange for it.

On the following Tuesday it was discovered that the cheque was a forgery. When I was questioned about it I acknowledged giving it to the person from whom I had purchased the goods, and was given into custody for passing a forged document. At the preliminary investigation I was remanded for trial, and taken to Bodmin.

The name on the forged document was that of Rev. Father Douglas, of St Vincent's Home for Boys. When the priest was summoned at the second investigation, which

took place within the jail at Bodmin, he swore on oath that he had never had any communication with me, and that he did not know me. After this investigation I was committed to take my trial at the next assizes.

During the time I was awaiting the trial, Captain Richard Parkyn wrote me some shameful letters; and, when he called to see me, his visits had anything but a soothing effect. He would tell me he had engaged the best counsel that money could procure. He seemed to take a pleasure in holding out hope to me and afterwards to glory in dashing it to the ground, and so days and weeks passed by. Of course, I was not a convicted prisoner, and had, therefore, many privileges.

Anxiously I awaited the time for the assizes. I had done nothing that I knew to be against the law. I had received the cheque in good faith. I still believed that my husband would procure me counsel. Mr. Collins, a solicitor in Bodmin, had been to see me several times, and on the day preceding the trial he told me that there would be no one to plead my case.

After he had left I burst into tears. I did not know what to do. However, I knew I was innocent, and so made up my mind to appeal myself to the jury. Having come to this decision, I asked for pen, ink, and paper; and, sitting down, I wrote out the plain facts of the case, and then laid down and tried to sleep; but no sleep visited my eyes. I lay tossing about; and when my breakfast was brought to me (I had the privilege before trial of ordering my meals

from the hotel), I could only drink a cup of tea.

At last the time came for me to be driven to the courtroom in Bodmin. Lord Chief Justice Coleridge was the presiding judge. My case came on about eleven o'clock. Father Douglas was present; he said on oath that he had never had any communication with me. Then it was shown that, whilst the goods were ordered, I had not attempted in any way to leave the town; no one had really been wronged. Several business persons, with whom I had had transactions, said that during the time I had been amongst them I had paid for all I purchased, and that they had found me perfectly honest. After this the governor of the gaol gave evidence as to the letters that Captain Parkyn had written me, and some of them were handed to the judge and jury to read. In one of these letters he told me that I was good-looking, and could easily earn plenty of money by my face. This letter caused a sensation.

It was proved, also, that in London on one occasion, to escape paying a small bill, he had deliberately said I was not his wife. The court adjourned for dinner, after which the trial was resumed, and I had an opportunity of addressing the jury. This I did, and in plain, simple language told them how the cheque had been given to me. I appealed to them for justice. Evidence had been given by men of integrity that my previous business transactions were perfectly correct. I had, unfortunately, married a man who ill-treated me. I could not account for the way in which he had received the cheque from Father Douglas.

The court was, if possible, more thronged than in the morning, and whilst addressing the jury I realised that I was striving for liberty. I became earnest, and more than an hour elapsed before I finished my address.

The judge then charged the jury. If they were satisfied that Captain Parkyn had given me the cheque, and that I had passed it in good faith, then I could not be held guilty of trying to obtain goods under false pretences. Especially should they bear in mind that no goods had been delivered. They had heard evidence given by men, whose word they had a right to accept, that my previous transactions with them had been perfectly straightforward and honest. They should also consider the way in which Mr. Parkyn had treated me during the time I awaited trial and the letters the governor of the prison had testified that I had received whilst there.

The jury retired, and were absent for over an hour. During that time I sat in the dock, and a thousand doubts and fears passed through my mind. Would the jury never return into the court! Oh, how the old scenes came back again! What fatality was there attached to me? I had seen a priest standing in the witness-box. What connection could he and Captain Parkyn have had? Was the Church still going to pursue me with hatred! Then the thought came upon me that perhaps the punishment was for my refusing to do what Father Gallagher had asked and advised; and so powerfully did superstition influence me that I made up my mind that in the event of my acquittal

I would put myself in communication with the Church and enter some *penitential* house.

At last the jury were about to re-enter the court, and the excitement became intense. I sat perfectly still. It seemed as if my heart had almost ceased to beat. The jury took their seats. The usher called out, "Silence!"

The clerk of the court addressed the jury: "Gentlemen, are you agreed upon your verdict?"

The foreman replied, "We are."

"What say you, gentlemen? do you find the prisoner guilty, or not guilty?"

Oh, God! how I waited on the reply! It came—"Not GUILTY!"

There was a moment's silence, and then the verdict was greeted with loud applause.

Lord Chief Justice Coleridge then, after addressing a few kind words of advice to me, told me I was free. I asked his protection from any molestation on the part of Captain Parkyn. He said that in the event of this taking place I should apply to the nearest magistrate, and also remarked that it would not be well for Captain Parkyn if he had to deal with him.

Many friends gathered around me. I was free; but the incidents of the past few months had once more brought all the sadness of my early life before me, and the old restless spirit took possession of me. I became a far unhappier woman than I had ever been.

Captain Parkyn came to see me. He made no excuses

for what he had done. I was sick and disheartened, and once more realised that I should have to commence life alone—the old battle would be renewed; old temptations would have to be fought against. So bitterness took the place of forgiveness once more. I felt the Church had had something to do with my present trouble. I forgot the resolution I had made whilst awaiting the verdict, and so passed out into the world once more, reckless of life, longing for death—for the sleep that brings no awakening.

Eighteen months afterwards, whilst in the convent, I learned from the Mother Superior of Capt. Parkyn's death.

CHAPTER XVI.

ENTERING THE CONVENT.

My health gave way, but my mental anxiety far surpassed any physical suffering; for, go where I might, the past was ever before me. As I walked on the streets, or entered a railway carriage, and saw a mother with her little child clinging to her, my thoughts immediately flew to my lost darling. As the evening shadows gathered, and I passed by homes within which through the window I saw the family gathered, a sense of utter loneliness would come over me. Oh, how sensitive I was! At last, unable any longer to bear my misery, as I tossed about night after

night unable to sleep, I began a practice that did much to injure me mentally and physically. I resorted to morphine to obtain sleep. At first, I took only very small doses, gradually increasing them until I was able to take two half-grains in one evening.

It was during this time that I was tempted to put an end to my life. Well do I remember how I used to brood over the idea, until at length it became fixed on my mind; and at last, crushed and weary, discouraged and bruised in heart, almost driven insane, I endeavored one evening to put an end to my life. But God willed it otherwise.

Once more an opportunity to enter into a house of seclusion and holy penitence presented itself, and finally I made up my mind to take advantage of it. I was *now* fully impressed that I would be sinning against God unless I carried out my determination. I was encouraged in this decision of mine by a lady in Bristol, to whom I had mentioned something of my troubles. This lady, whose name unfortunately at this moment I cannot recollect, was at that time deeply interested in philanthropic work, and she undertook to make all arrangements with the Bishop and Mother Superior of Arno's Court Convent, Bristol. Her influence was sufficient, and in a few days she informed me that I could enter the convent.

The institution is situated just about one or one and a half miles from the city, and is close to the Roman Catholic Cemetery. It stands within the diocese of Bishop Clifford of Clifton, Bristol.

The name of the Mother Superior at that time was Rev. Mother Good Shepherd. She is a relative of Bishop Clifford, and connected with the Petors' family. Then we had a Mother Assistant, who would take the Mother Superior's place. Amongst the choir Sisters were the following: Sister Mary of The Venerable John Eudes, who was Mistress of Consecrated Penitents; Sister Mary St. John Baptist; Sister Mary of Holy Compassion, infirmarian; Sister Mary of St. Ursula; Sister Mary of St. Francis Xavier, who had charge of the dispensary and also the Church choir; Sister Mary of St. Thais, second Mistress of Consecrated Penitents. This latter Sister is the niece of Bishop Clifford, and a sister of the present Lord Peters, who, being ordained a priest, is called Father Peters. Sister St. Thias's name before entering the convent was Honorable Margaret Peters; her father, late Lord Peters, was succeeded by her brother, Father Peters. Her father died whilst I was in the convent, in 1882.

Amongst the lay Sisters were Sister Mary of St. Pascoe, a genuine Irish woman, of whom I will speak later, and Sister Mary of St. Barbara. The former had charge of the clothes, and the latter of the refectory. There were other Sisters, but those I have mentioned were the ones with whom I was more particularly associated. Then amongst the consecrated penitents were, first, Sister Alphonsius of the Dolours. She was the oldest. Then Sister Theresa of the Dolours, Sister Madeline, Sister Margaret, Sister

Dominica, Sister Josephine, Sister Palagia, Sister Augustine, and Sister Emily.

I mention all these names because I have so often been accused by Roman Catholics of never having been in the convent, and, as so few years have elapsed since the day I left that institution, no doubt all, or, at least, the greater number, I have named, are still there.

The name of the priest when first I entered was Father Kleniadam, a German. When he left, he was succeeded by Father Doyle, who was there during the rest of my stay.

The Convent of St. Arno's Court is a penitential institution. I am aware that many who have tried to injure me have said that it is a prison reformatory. This is absolutely and emphatically false. The government has nothing to do with it; neither have prison officials. It is an institution where, under the guise of CONSECRATED PENITENTS, you will find MANY VICTIMS of PRIESTLY PERSECUTION, whose greatest crime, like mine, is that they believed in the priesthood, trusted individual priests, only to find that their lives had become wrecked and ruined, and that the child born to them and the priest had been taken to an asylum, whilst they wore out the rest of their existence in tears, mortifications, and penances.

Sister Dominica, whom I mentioned, had served her novitiate in the House of the Sisters of Presentation in Cork, Ireland, where her own sister is Superior. But

whilst there she became the victim of a priest, and afterwards came to our convent as a consecrated penitent. She received the black veil after she had been with us one year, instead of waiting two, because the bishop gave dispensation, taking into consideration the time she had spent in the Presentation Order in Cork.

When, for the first time, I entered the door of the nunnery, it was with that earnest desire and intention that I would never again leave it. The lady to whom I referred as interesting herself, went to the convent with me, and, when we arrived in front of the great massive door and rang the bell, I trembled so violently that she had to support me. The grill was opened in response to the bell, and the face of a sister was seen peering through. On hearing who we were, she immediately opened the door and admitted us. Entering, we found ourselves in a cool marble-tessellated cloister. The Sister, who I afterwards learned was Sister Mary Francis, the portress, was dressed in black serge. The black skirt was made very full, and clasped round the waist with blue woollen cords and tassels, which hung down her left side. She wore a short, round black cape, a black bonnet with a white frill, and from the bonnet fell her black veil. On her breast, attached to the black woollen braid, was a silver heart. She ushered us into the parlor, and left us, saying she would send the Mother Superior to us. Whilst she was gone I had an opportunity to look around the room. This I did, taking in with a glance all its

details.

The floor was void of carpet, but the boards were scrupulously white and clean. A table stood in the centre, and around the room were three or four chairs. A small window looked out upon a patch of garden. There were a few cheap religious pictures adorning the walls.

In a short time the parlor door opened, and a black-veiled nun entered. She was Sister Mary of Venerable Eudes, mistress of consecrated penitents. This Sister had a great deal of character in her face. She was not what one would term handsome, but there was a peculiar charm about her in face, voice, and manner that was irresistible. She had a great deal of personal magnetism, and was thoroughly devoted to her work.

On entering the parlor, Sister Mary of Venerable Eudes greeted me very pleasantly, and expressed herself as being very much pleased to receive me into the nunnery, and hoped I might find peace and contentment in the penitential life I had chosen. She then conducted me through a long cloister; and, as she passed by the church door, she entered, motioning me to follow her. She knelt before the altar rails for a few moments, her lips moving in silent prayer. I found out afterwards that this was a practice of hers at the admission of every inmate placed under her charge. She made them an offering to God, praying that their coming into the nunnery might redound to His glory and honor.

After finishing her short prayer, the sister rose and led

me out through a second cloister past the priest's house; then, turning to the right, we found ourselves in the clothes-room, or the room in which we laid aside our street dress and put on the probationary garb.

In this room I saw Sister Mary St. Pascoe, whom Sister Mary Venerable Eudes requested to go and bring with her Sister Theresa of the Seven Dolours. A few minutes elapsed, and then the sister returned accompanied by another who was not dressed like Sister Venerable Eudes. Sister Theresa of the Dolours had been in the convent fourteen years, and, next to Alphonsius, was the oldest consecrated penitent in the institution. She was about about thirty-five years old, and was thoroughly Irish. Inheriting a vast amount of native wit, she had an honest, good face. Her chief charm, however, lay in her eyes. They were large, soft, and dark-brown in color; and, as she related to us in recreation-hour some of her earlier experiences in the nunnery, they would sparkle with mirth and then melt into tenderness as she pleaded with us to yield our will to, and deny ourselves for Christ. I always liked Theresa; there was so much *true* nobility of character in her; in fact, I preferred her to any of the other consecrated penitents, although I liked most of them.

Sister Theresa conducted me to the class-room. It was the quarter-hour recreation, and groups of sisters were scattered around. A low hum of voices pervaded the room; and, at the end, on a raised dias, was seated Sister Mary of Holy Compassion, with a group of four or five

around her. She was engaged in repairing the white linen bandeaux of the choir sisters.

As we entered, she looked up over her spectacles, and in that look, one could see that she had a genius for reading character.

Sister Theresa advanced towards one of the groups and introduced me to those seated. All gave me a smile of welcome, and I noticed that each had in her hand a piece needlework.

A few minutes after our entrance, the silence-bell rang, and instantly every voice was hushed. Several took up their chairs and went to other parts of the room, Theresa led me to the left-hand side, near a door leading into the work-room, where all the cutting-out and machining were done. She gave me a seat by her side, and then procured me a thimble, needle, and some small garments to work on. When all were settled to their tasks, Sister Mary Compassion commenced the rosary, to which the others responded.

I did not feel particularly devotional, but was impressed by my present surroundings. I looked around the room and watched the faces of my companions as they worked, and then at the Sister in charge, who would look over her spectacles every time she said, "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

Suddenly, I heard a sound resembling a snore; and, looking around in the direction whence it proceeded, I saw

poor old Ursula, whom they called the "Saint." There she sat, sound asleep with her work lying on her lap, her head resting on her broad, expansive chest; the perspiration standing in beads on her forehead; and so accustomed had the dear old soul become to whispering her prayers that even in her sleep her lips moved. I smiled to myself.

In a short time the rosary was finished, and perfect silence reigned. Ursula awoke with a start, blessed herself, and began stroking out gathers, which was her special work.

At 4.45, Sister Mary St. Thais entered and relieved Sister Mary Compassion, and then read to us a short meditation, after which the most perfect silence reigned, in order that we might meditate on the lesson, until 5.45 P.M., when we commenced folding up our work preparatory to going to the refectory to supper, which was partaken of in silence; one of the consecrated reading to us a lecture from the life of St. Catherine of Sienna.

As I lay on my mattress that night, the moon shone in through the window directly opposite my bed; and, as its beams reflected on the large crucifix that hung on the wall, and revealed to me the form of Christ crucified, showing—oh! so clearly—the thorn-clad brow and the wounded palms, something akin to the devotion of earlier and happier days sprang into my heart. The old home-scenes came before me; and that night, for the first time in my

life, I repented of the course I had taken, when throwing aside the promise made to my mother, I gave up my honor and happiness—my innocence into the keeping of one who had so cruelly wronged me. I had, through gratifying my own selfish desires, robbed Christ of the glory that might have been his had I kept true to my vow and taken the advice given by those interested in me. Yes, those early days in which I could have offered to my Saviour my life unmarred by the affections of the world, pure, innocent, and heart-whole. Oh, that I could have recalled the lost opportunity ! And I sobbed in my heart, and then a quiet came to me ; and with it the thought that, though I had sinned, yet, following in the footsteps of the holy penitents Magdalene, Thais, and many others, I could, by a life of penance and seclusion, make reparation for my sin ; and, sitting at the Master's feet in spirit with Mary of old, I could wash them with my tears, and hear Him say, " Her sins are forgiven her ; for she hath loved much."

CHAPTER XVII.

DAILY ROUTINE OF LIFE.

AWAKENED next morning by the loud ringing of the nuns' bell, I forgot for a moment where I was ; but one glance around the room brought everything back to my memory. So, robing myself, I followed the rest of the probationers, who, having accomplished their toilet, remained by the side of their beds in absolute silence until a second bell clanged out. Then we all descended to the class-room and engaged in morning prayer, which was led by Sister Mary Compassion. After prayer, the Sister read to us from a book a short exercise on some particular grace or virtue, on which we meditated ; or, if we so preferred, we could make the Stations of the Cross until Mass bell rang. Then we immediately fell into procession, and those intending to partake of Holy Communion went up to the desk for a muslin veil, and, when handed them by the sister, they would kneel down and kiss the floor. Then, kissing the veil, they would pin it over their white starched cap, only removing it after Mass.

From Mass we went directly to the refectory, where we partook of a breakfast consisting of bread and dripping and a cup of weak coffee. Many Sisters, having a devotion for the sufferings of Christ from thirst on the cross, would

take a tablespoonful of salt and put it into their coffee ; and, as they drank the briny liquid, would offer the physical suffering they endured by the act to Christ for his physical sufferings on the cross. The spiritual merit gained by this act of mortification they would apply to the soul of some friend in purgatory. After breakfast, the consecrated penitents would proceed to the church and there recite the Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Then we had fifteen minutes' recreation, to enable us to get our work ready by the time the bell rang at 9 o'clock. At that hour, and in response to the first stroke of the bell, we all proceeded to our various departments of work, until the bell rang at 11 o'clock, when the Litany to the Virgin Mary was repeated. At 11.30 the dinner-bell rang. We then assembled in the class or community-room, forming a procession, and placing our hands within our large flowing-sleeves, walked with downcast eyes and slow mien to the refectory. Taking our places at the table, we remained standing until the mistress of the consecrated said grace. She then sat down, and we did the same. Our dinner was brought to us on trays, and we were supposed to eat, without murmuring, anything that was placed before us. During the meal, as at supper, one of the consecrated, seated on a high stool, read to us a lecture.

I remember very well, during the Lent of 1882, that Sister Magdalene Margaret of the Dolours was the lecturer appointed for the month ; and one Thursday at dinner-time she was reading to us from the Life of St. Catherine of

Sienna. I was rather hungry that day, and knew that, for having abstained from meat the day previously (Wednesday), we would be allowed a better dinner. I was rather glad to hear the dinner-bell. I had not proceeded with my meal very far when Sister M. Margaret of the Dolours commenced reading, and, unfortunately for many of us, she had arrived at that part of the book where the biographer of the Saint gives the following account of one of her acts of mortification :—

“It seems that St. Catherine was, at one period of her life, acting in the capacity of nurse in a cancer hospital. One morning, in company with a secular nurse, she was engaged in dressing the cancer of one of the patients, and while thus engaged her whole nature seemed to revolt against her occupation. Then, almost immediately accusing herself of this sin, and fearing lest she might have caused disedification in the presence of the secular nurse, St. Catherine, after the wound was dressed, retired into an adjoining room. With the corruption that she held in a basin, and offering her act to God, she placed the dish to her lips and swallowed the contents.”

No words of mine can make the reader understand the horrible, death-like sickness that came over me. I dropped my knife and fork. My appetite was gone. A horrible nausea at last compelled me to rise up from the table, and I quickly rushed out of the refectory. For doing this the mistress of consecrated penitents gave me a penance, which was to eat my breakfast and supper off the floor for three

days.

After dinner we returned to the class-room, said the recreation-prayer, and then had recreation for one hour. In fine weather we strolled around the garden, or sat down on garden chairs with our work in our hands until the silence-bell at one o'clock. Then we would once more go to our various occupations and remain in silence until three P.M., when the tea-bell would ring, and we would proceed to the refectory for that meal, which was partaken in fifteen minutes, and then return to the refectory for half an hour's recreation, when we would again take up our work. It was during this recreation-hour that I had first been introduced by Sister Theresa into the class-room. All that I might now add is that, after the supper-hour, the consecrated would once more retire to the church to say their Office to the Blessed Virgin; then we would have recreation until 7.30. At that time the silence-bell ringing, we would assemble in the class-room, and spend half an hour in quiet meditation. At eight o'clock, Sister Mary Venerable Eudes would enter the room, and, taking her seat on the raised dais, we would rise up, and, kneeling before her in a semi-circle, the oldest consecrated penitent would say the accusation-prayer. We would then all kiss the floor, and accuse ourselves of any little fault we had committed, or rule we might have broken, and ask forgiveness and penance. Sister Mary Venerable Eudes would then give to those who had confessed a fault, what we, in convent phraseology, termed a "HUMILIATION;" or, some-

times desiring to test our vocation, she would accuse us of faults we were entirely innocent of, and say the most humiliating things to us—all of which we were supposed to receive in silent resignation, kissing the floor to her after she had finished. Did we try to justify ourselves, we were considered disqualified to become consecrated.

I had, at the time of entering the convent, a very passionate, wilful disposition, as has been manifested in the first part of this work; and well do I remember how hard it was for me at times to submit quietly. Sometimes, after I had received such a humiliation, smarting from a sense of injustice, I would be apt to give way to my temper. Then during recreation hour, Sister Venerable Eudes would send for me to her own room, and sit down and talk to me. She would explain how necessary was such an act on her part to help me to a life of holy penitence. No woman outside of my mother had the same influence over me as Sister Venerable Eudes; she seemed to understand me, and in my wildest hours, when at times almost beside myself with passion in consequence of the wrong I considered the Church had made me suffer, and when no other Sister would dare to speak to me, she would come, and one look from her eyes would subdue me.

From my experience in science and will-power as practised to-day by many, I am now convinced that she held a mesmeric power over me, though I was not at that time conscious of the fact.

It will perhaps be interesting to my reader to know the style of dress worn by the consecrated penitents. The dress is made of black serge, the skirt of which is full and gathered into a waist cut open at the neck in a V shape, thus displaying the white handkerchief worn. Over the waist is a small black merino shawl, brought across the shoulders and pinned down in front, similar to the manner in which a fashionable woman would pin down a lace fichu. The ends of the shawl are tucked under a black linen or alpaca apron, and in the back the letters I.H.S. are embroidered in white cotton. A brown leather belt is clasped around the waist, and a white woollen cord, to which are attached tassels, is also worn around the waist, and allowed to hang down the left side touching the hem; these cords have seven knots, in honor of the Seven Dolours of the Blessed Virgin; and on the right side is suspended a chaplet made of black wooden beads. Around the shoulder is pinned a black woollen braid, to which is attached a flat silver cross, in the centre of which is engraved a heart pierced with seven daggers, representing the seven sorrows of our Lady of Dolours. The sleeves of the dress are long, falling completely over the hands, and are twenty-three inches wide. When in church, or whilst saying Office in the class-room or garden, the sleeves are kept down; but whilst at work, or during recreation-hour, they are pinned up, displaying a tight-fitting under-sleeve of black serge, around the wrist of which is sewn a piece of white linen. A white starched cap falling over the

brow and hanging down, each side touching the shoulder, surmounted by a black veil, completes the attire.

The only difference between the consecrated penitent who has taken her final vows and the probationer is, that the former wears the silver cross and a black veil, and is called Sister — of the Dolours. The probationer wears no cross and a white veil, and is designated as Sister — of the Desert. After two years, should the probationer make her final vows, she receives at the altar the black veil and cross from the hand of the bishop or officiating priest.

On entering the nunnery of Arno's Court (where I remained an inmate for several years) the visitors find themselves in a cloister, on the right-hand side of which is the private entrance to the priest's house; and on the left-hand side are four or five parlors, kept exclusively for receiving visitors. One parlor is used for the reception of probationers desiring to enter the cloister as consecrated penitents. At the end of the cloister, on the left-hand side, is the church, which is most beautifully decorated. On entering the door there is, in a niche about four feet from the ground, a very beautiful life-size statue of our Lady of Dolours—indeed, one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. On the opposite side in a similar niche is another statue of the Holy Virgin as the Immaculate Conception. In the centre is the communion-rail, within which is erected a beautiful altar where Mass is celebrated. Leading from the altar on the left-hand side was the

sacristy, where the priest's vestments are kept and where he sometimes hears confession, if the church should be undergoing repair. On the right-hand side, directly opposite the sacristy, is a beautiful little chapel, kept for the exclusive use of the Choir Sisters. Passing out of the private door of this chapel, one enters into a cloister which leads into the choir Sisters' community-room, which is on the right-hand side, and directly opposite are the stairs leading into the dormitories and infirmary. At the end of the cloister is a large door, which leads into the Sisters' private garden; and here those who die in the nunnery are buried, the funeral taking place on the third morning after death. I might add here, that any number of deaths might occur during the year, and the world would be none the wiser. No doctor's certificate is necessary. The gardener of the establishment—who, as a general rule, is deaf and purblind—digs the grave; the Sisters carry the coffin; the priest reads the funeral service, and so the matter ends. We say the aspiration, "ETERNAL REST GIVE UNTO HER, O LORD, AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HER," three times in every successive hour for one week, believing that by doing so we obtain for the soul some remission of punishment in purgatory.

The consecrated penitents have many penances to perform. We are taught that the more we mortify ourselves and try to imitate our Lord in His sufferings, the more do we glorify Him in this life, and the greater spiritual merit do we gain for our souls when in purgatory.

It is usual for the consecrated Sisters to make what is termed their private manifestation of conscience to the mistress, Sister Venerable Eudes, once each week. By "manifestation of conscience," I mean that we enter the private room of the sister separately and first kiss the floor. She then gives us her blessing, accompanying the words with the sign of the cross, which she makes on our forehead; after this she proceeds to question us kindly and minutely as to our daily life, and, using great subtilty, she draws from us all our likes and dislikes. Have we a preference for any particular kind of work? If so, then two or three days afterwards, should we be engaged in that particular work, we will find ourselves deprived of it, and put to something we dislike. This is done in order to test us, and to see if we have the qualifications necessary to become a consecrated penitent. Humiliations of every kind are heaped upon us.

On approaching the Reverend Mother, or the Mistress of Consecrated Penitents, it is our duty to kiss the floor; and, should we be discovered by either, breaking our silence, then immediately we prostrate ourselves before them, thus acknowledging our fault and seeking forgiveness.

I remember, on one occasion, while kneeling before Sister Mary Venerable Eudes, she accused me of a fault against holy poverty. It was after the silence-bell had rung at eight o'clock, and we were kneeling before her.

She said: "I notice, *Magdalene Adelaide of the Desert*

DAILY ROUTINE OF LIFE.

that you waste your crumbs."

I kissed the floor.

Then continuing, she said: "Six months before you came to this House, one of the consecrated penitents died. During her lifetime she had wasted her crumbs, and, shortly after her death, Sister Mary St. Francis Xavier, whilst passing through the refectory, had her attention attracted to one of the tables. Looking towards it, she saw the holy soul of the Sister who had died, sitting under the table, picking up the crumbs she had wasted during her lifetime. That same night, Sister St. Francis Xavier had a vision; and in it she saw the holy soul of the Sister, who appeared to her, and told her that for every crumb she had wasted in life she had to suffer one extra quarter-hour's punishment in purgatory.

When Sister Mary Venerable Eudes told me this, my superstition was fully aroused; I determined to be more careful in the future.

It was strictly against our rules to speak to each other in reference to our friends or our home-life in any way. It was during the summer of 1883 that Father Hayes, a Jesuit priest, conducted our retreat. It is usual, during such a time, for us to remain in absolute silence, and to speak only to the Father conducting the retreat and the mistress of consecrated penitents. Our retreat lasted one week, and every day during that time we had four sermons or meditations. Then, unusual privileges were given us to go into the church any hour,—though of

course we did our work at certain hours. Three or four days of the retreat were over, when, one evening, between supper and the last meditation hour, I was walking with a probationer, named Pelagia. We were repeating the rosary as we passed around the garden walk; and afterwards thoughtlessly entered into conversation. Pelagia asked me how I liked the retreat and Father Hayes.

I replied by saying, "very much."

"Well," said Pelagia, "Father Hayes kissed me."

I looked at her in surprise. Noticing this, she continued, "Oh, Sister Magdalene Adelaide, you need not look so surprised; you will get to know these priests better by and by."

I said nothing. Oh, too well I knew what a priest was capable of doing. I allowed the matter to pass, but I *knew* it was my duty, in accordance with the rule of obedience, to acquaint the mistress with what Pelagia had said; but I hesitated to do so. The *woman* within me shrank from breaking confidence; but my *Catholic teaching*, my superstition, overcame my natural disinclination. Thinking in some way to effect a compromise, I asked Sister Venerable Eudes if I might speak with Father Kleniadam, the house priest. She told me to go into the confessional, and she would lead him to me. I did so, and, when the Father arrived, I told him of what had taken place, and asked him if he would dispense me from telling Sister Venerable Eudes—but he called to my remembrance the fact of my vow of obedience, and com-

manded me at once to acquaint the Sister of the fault committed. Accordingly, I did so; and after listening to me, she requested that I should say nothing about the matter.

Some few days after, I missed Pelagia, and, when the retreat was over, I found one day that she had been severely penanced. What that penance was I never knew.

Oh, how many sad, heart-breaking stories could the walls of the convent of Arno's Court reveal if they were but able to speak! How some priests who now walk with uplifted heads would shrink away from the gaze of their fellow-men, if their dark, evil deeds were known! And how unnecessary would such penitential nunneries be, if it were not for a licentious priesthood. These "holy" celibates, who are wolves in sheep's clothing; and who, under the cassock, carry hearts full of corruption; who know no pity when seeking to lure a young and innocent girl into sin—ah, how easy the Church of Rome makes it for such lepers by placing the victim in a house of penance and the child born of sin into one of the foundling hospitals under the care of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. I do not hesitate to say that a large percentage of the children in these institutions are the illegitimate offspring of Roman Catholic priests; and Protestants sometimes vie with each other in giving large donations to support these foundling hospitals.

I have often been asked whether nunneries are places of immorality. All I can say is, that when a woman enters

such an institution and takes her vow of obedience, she is told that she must do whatever is requested of her. She must sink her individuality into that of her spiritual superiors; and, should she be told to do anything that is against her conscience, then she is told that the MORAL OBLIGATION of the sin rests upon the one who told her under obedience to commit it, and that all she has to do is to be OBEDIENT. Should she still hesitate, then her life becomes a perfect hell upon earth. For her there is no womanly sympathy; no consideration, no love, only discipline, and too late she learns that the system to which she has bound herself, instead of making her life one of happiness, peace, and rest, is cruel, despotic, unnatural, crushing out every hope, every aspiration, and filling her with remorse and despair.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HELL UPON EARTH.

THERE is a rule in the convent that all letters written by or received for the inmates shall first be scrutinized by the Mother Superior, except it be a letter from a priest. Such a letter always has a distinguishing mark, and is handed unopened to the Sister to whom it is addressed. The letter is supposed to be on the subject of spiritual welfare, and the priest writing it will tell her that on a

certain day he will be in the convent for the purpose of hearing her *general confession*. Having acquainted the Reverend Mother of the date of the proposed visit, she gives the Sister permission to absent herself from the duties of the day. The priest arrives; he is shown into the *retreat* parlor; and, no matter how long he remains there, no one will disturb him. He is supposed to be TALKING with his penitent on the welfare of her soul. When I think of THIS SYSTEM—THIS SYSTEM born of the devil, nurtured in hell—and realize that under the cloak of religion it is stealing away our liberties, entering into our homes, ruining our pure womanhood, despoiling childish purity, defiling everything with which it comes in contact, then, in spite of all that has been said and done against me, it seems as if I cannot remain quiet. But, closing my eyes and ears to every other thing, I have to stand up and cry out, and warn the people of this and other lands of the great danger threatening us. Convent-life is a hell upon earth—it is a blot on any land.

I call to mind a case of cruelty under the guise of devotion that happened in our convent. A consecrated penitent, Sister Madeline, had been for some time a victim of consumption. She was a beautiful girl, and her exquisitely sweet voice could be heard in church every Sunday, taking part in the High Mass. Poor Sister Madeline! How many humiliations she received! How often she was censured for leaving her work unfinished when she was not able to do it; and how I have pitied her as she

tried to eat the bread and dripping we had for supper. Failing in the attempt, I would notice the tears gather in her eyes. Oh, how often I longed to be able to obtain some little delicacy for her! but dared not ask for it. Her gentle, patient, suffering face will never fade from my memory.

One Sunday evening she and I were walking in the garden after benediction. She felt more than usually weak, and, with the permission of the Rev. Mother, I offered her my arm to lean upon.

"Dear Sister Magdalene Adelaide," she said, "I think our blessed Lord is soon going to come for me."

I tried to cheer her by telling her that it might be His will to restore her again to health and strength.

"No, dear Sister," she replied; and oh, I do not want to stay. I long to see my Master's face. At night, when I lie awake in pain, I long, oh, so much, that I might go!"

"Sister Magdalene Madeline," I said, "you have been happy here, have you not? You love your present life?"

We had seated ourselves by this time in a little grotto made up in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes. She buried her face in her hands, and I saw the tears trickling between her fingers.

My own eyes filled with tears; I know not why.

At last, raising up her head, she said: "I have tried my best to be contented; but, oh! Sister Adelaide, it has

been a bitter struggle. It is wrong in me to give way thus; but I cannot help it. May Our Lord pity me! I want you to promise, dear Sister, that you will say a rosary for me every day for a year after I am dead, and one communion every month."

"I will gladly do this for you, Sister Madeline," I answered. "Tell me," I continued, "is there any particular day you prefer?"

"Yes," she replied; "I would like your Friday communion. Promise me that on the anniversary of the feast of St. Mary Magdalene, my patron saint, you will offer your communion for me."

I promised her this, and she seemed more satisfied.

"I know," she said, "that I shall have a long purgatory." She shuddered as she spoke. "And oh! I do hope the dear Sisters will remember me in their prayers and communions."

"Dear Sister Madelene," I said at last, "purgatory is better than hell; and our Blessed Lady will intercede for you."

"Yes, dear Sister Magdalene Adelaide," she said, "you are right; but oh!" she continued, "I cannot help the shudder that passes through me as I think of the suffering I shall be in for years, especially after all the mortifications I have practised here, the discipline I have applied to myself, the days I have abstained from food, the prayers I have offered, the tears I have shed; and now that death approaches, there is no other prospect

before me than a long term of purgatorial punishment. Besides, the punishment will be all the greater since I have given way to an unnatural thought."

"And what, may I ask, do you call an unnatural thought?"

"Sister Magdalene Adelaide, come close to me."

I rose from my chair and knelt down beside her.

"Dear Sister, I have endeavored to bear my cross," she commenced, speaking with difficulty; "but oh! Sister, I dread the end; I have so much to expiate; and oh," she continued, her voice now choked with sobs, "if only I could have my mother near me; if only I could hear her voice once more, it is so long since I have seen her. I have asked for any letter that may have come, but they tell me none has arrived, and oh! I don't think mother has quite forgotten me."

I dared not trust myself to speak, my heart was too full; at last I said, "Dear Sister, do not grieve thus; our Blessed Lady will intercede for you. Remember, in coming here, your purpose, even as mine, was to make reparation for sin. You and I have both suffered. Be brave now dear, and now that the end is near do not take away from God's glory by fearing for the future."

Two days after this conversation the Rev. Mother sent me a message, requesting me to sit up with Sister Madeline, as there was every possibility she would pass away that night. When the silence bell had rung, and our last meditation had been made, I went to the infirmary. Poor

Sister Madeline lay on her hard straw mattress scarcely breathing. I turned down the gas quite low, and taking a chair I seated myself at the window over-looking the garden. I thought of the conversation that had taken place between us the two previous Sundays, and could not help feeling that the Church was unreasonable in trying to make us crush out all natural affection for those near and dear to us. I turned to look at Sister Madeline, and saw that she was moving around restlessly. Going up to her I looked into her face, and saw the grey pallor and the damp dew, that only too surely betokened that the end was near.

"Dear Sister Madeline" I said, "Is there anything I can do for you?"

She opened her eyes. What a look of dumb pleading there was in them! She tried to speak, but could not do so—her lips were parched and cracked—I moistened them with water, and then saw them move.

"Pray for me," she whispered. I repeated the "Memorare." For a few moments she was still, then once more I saw her lips move. Stooping down I heard her almost gasp out, "My feet! oh, my feet." I arose from my chair and removed the sheet with the intention of rubbing her limbs; as I did so, her feet were disclosed. A thrill of horror passed through my being as I looked at them; for they were all cut, festered, and bruised; a fearful suspicion took possession of me, and, stooping down, I picked up her infirmity shoes. On examination, I discovered in them pieces of broken glass, I held the shoes in my hands and

looked at the pale suffering face of Madeline as she lay there on her bed ; and, as I write this evening, the whole scene rises before me—the little infirmary with its clean, white floor, a few cheap prints of the stations of the cross hanging on the otherwise bare walls, the two or three small iron bedsteads, then the white wooden altar upon which was spread a white linen cloth embroidered with red ; the two statues, one of Our Lady of Dolours, and the second of St. Joseph, the patron of happy deaths. In the centre of the altar was a vase with a few cheap paper flowers.

Yes, it comes to me most vividly. There she lay ; the sin of her past life being that she, too, had been deceived at the altars of Rome—a victim of priestly solicitation in the confessional. Even as she lay there in the last stages of consumption, traces of what had at one time been a beautiful face were clearly discernible. What had she NOT SUFFERED for years ! Who could tell the many weary hours of heart anguish she had passed through ? And yet she was young,—hardly 25 ! years old. She had given up all that was near and dear ; and, for the years she had lived in the convent, she had tried to appease God's justice for her early sin by mortifying and chastising herself in a way that can only find a parallel in the doctrines of Buddha or the followers of the god Moloch in the Old Testament. Oh, Madeline, poor, wounded, betrayed one ! Who can wonder, as you lay there with the fever of consumption running and coursing through your veins, that, in spite of all the

teachings and practices of self-denial in the convent life in which you had lived so many years, yet, when the hour of death drew nigh, and your soul was hovering on the borders of the unknown eternity, your thoughts once more went back to the old home-scenes, and you longed, as only a child can, for the sight of a mother's face, the sound of a mother's voice, the cool, soothing touch of a mother's hand passing over your brow? They tried to crush down the natural love that God placed in your heart for your mother, but they could not. The use of the discipline caused the blood to flow and gave you physical suffering; fasting and long prayers made you weak, and thus incapable of exercising will-power; and, when no other eye but God's was upon you, when struggling with the desire to leave forever the hateful prison walls of the convent, the bitter tears forced their way. Then, kneeling before the statue of the Mother of Sorrows, you pleaded with her to help and intercede for you, what comfort did you get? What hope? What consolation? NONE! You made good confessions and communions, practised all the self-denials required of one in your vocation, and the only thing that the Church could give you, the only gleam of HOPE she could offer, was that through your works of supererogation your purgatory would be lessened; and then, wasted through suffering and consumption, dreading the punishment of purgatory, endeavoring in your dying state to do something to lessen its pangs, you walked with glass in your shoes, and your poor feet gave evidence of the agony

you endured. And this they called Christianity!

I applied cold cloths to her feet; I sat down in the dimly-lighted infirmary, by the side of her bed; and, holding the fevered and trembling hand, I, in my ignorance, tried to give her some comfort. I promised to remember her in my intentions, my communions, and at the sacrifice of the Mass. I spoke to her of the mercy and compassion of Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, and tried to give her hope by pointing to her as Mediator between her soul and Christ; but I could see that she received no satisfaction, no assurance. Then her eyes closed, and she dozed for a few minutes, only to awake with a moan of pain—"Oh, my feet! oh, my feet!" And then again, "If only I could see my mother!" would issue from her lips.

And so I sat through the night, soothing her as well as I knew how—and repeating aspirations for her—until the dawn crept in and the nuns' bell rang out at 4.30 o'clock, arousing the inmates. The quietness and deep stillness still remained throughout the institution, the Sisters and penitents walking in the dimly lighted cloisters with soft tread and downcast eyes—as if in the land of the silent dead, and not the living.

CHAPTER XIX.

"SOLD TO ROME."

It was customary with the Sisters to give the Bishop and priest of the diocese of Clifton a dinner once every year. Of course, this entailed a great deal of extra work on their part. The greatest delicacies of the season and choicest wines graced the table. The dinner was served in the dining-room of the priest of the house.

The Bishop usually arrived at two or three o'clock in the afternoon. Scarlet felt was put down on the cloister in honor of the occasion, and the drawing-room fragrant with rare and beautiful flowers; the dinner-table would be resplendent with rich silver and cut-glass.

This annual dinner was always made an occasion of great rejoicing and recreation on the part of the holy ecclesiastics. Everything was right as long as the meal was proceeding, but, as soon as the Sisters who had waited on them had withdrawn, after placing wine and cigars on the table, then all restraint would be put aside, and the HOLY FATHERS (God save the mark!) would then exchange confidences as to the various items of news they had gathered in the confessional from Catholic servants employed in Protestant families; and, without mentioning names, would repeat, amidst shouts of drunken laughter, the sins that some young girls had confessed. I wish it

to be CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD that Roman Catholic priests are not allowed to abuse the secrets of the sacramental confession, but can discuss confessions without using names, and thus keep within the bounds of ecclesiastical law.

And thus the carousal would proceed. The whiskey bowl would be placed on the table, and then songs would be sung.

The favorite songs would be "Widow McChree," "The Irish Jaunting Car," "Lannigan's Ball," and such like. The chorus of all songs would be hilariously voiced, and encored amidst the clattering of glasses. Such conduct under the cloak of religion brings disgrace to the name of Christianity, and would not be tolerated among Protestant ministers and people. We had recreation on Saints' days and other holidays ; but the day we specially kept was that of Feast of St. Mary Magdalen, July 22nd. For one week previously to this date we would enter a spiritual retreat, conducted by some Jesuit priest. It was at this season of the year that those who had passed a successful probation of two years would exchange the white veil for the black, and would receive the silver cross of consecration and be dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows. The names of the candidates for consecration would first be brought by Sister Mary Venerable Eudes, Mistress of Penitents, to the Rev. Mother Superior, and a solemn meeting of the choir and lay Sisters would be held, and the merits and demerits of the candidates be discussed and decided on. Sometimes, in order to give a

last test to the vocation of one or more of those who had been selected as worthy of consecration, Sister Mary Venerable Eudes would send for them, and would tell them that they would have to wait for another year. If this announcement was received with resignation, then one or two days before entering into the spiritual retreat she would undeceive them, and on the 22nd of July they would make their consecration. The hymn sung on the occasion was composed by one of the choir Sisters of the Order; but, at the time of writing, I forget the name of the author. I quote the first verse:—

“ The low sweet voice of Jesus
Spoke to my heart one day ;
And, as I listened silently,
Methought I heard Him say:
My daughter, oh, my daughter,
Thy dwelling *now* must be,
For me Thy Lord and Master,
On the hill of Calvary.”

The consecrated penitents and probationers have to work very hard, and to undergo many mortifications; one of which is that of the discipline in honor of the scourging of our Lord upon the cross. Then they embroider the most beautiful priestly vestments and altar cloths, paint Christmas and Easter cards, copy music and manuscripts for composers and authors, make elegant fancy work for Roman Catholic fairs, and fill all orders for needle-work from the large stores in Bristol. Eight

to ten machines are constantly kept in use; and I should not omit mentioning that hundreds of thousands of scapulars are made there yearly, especially that of the Sacred Heart. Then large sums of money are contributed by philanthropic people amongst Protestants, who do not look under the surface to the principle underlying the conventual system, as well as to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Confessional. How vauntingly the Church points to her charitable institutions as monuments of her greatness, and is perpetually begging funds for their support; when the real fact is, that they are in every case, SELF-SUPPORTING and MORE than self-supporting.

Then she claims that the system of auricular or secret confession to the priest ALONE has a great moral restrictive power over vice and immorality—when it CAN in REALITY BE, nay, has been proved that the debasing and demoralising influence of this same doctrine of auricular confession has made it imperative to build just such cloistered institutions as the Convent of Arno's Court, Bristol, where the victims of a debauched and lecherous priesthood are incarcerated, so that the world may not become familiar with the thousands of lives ruined and blasted through priestly solicitation. Yea, it is true; the world does NOT know these things; but a time is COMING when, at the judgemnt-bar of God, these vile debauchers of innocent girlhood and pure womanhood will meet their victims; and there, before the assembled hosts, their hypocrisy and villany will be uncovered; when their

victims, one by one will point them out; when murdered infants will rise up against them; when outraged husbands will claim God's justice, and the tortures of the inquisitorial dungeons will cry out against them. And there, at that tribunal where ALL are judged alike, these priests will receive from God a just but awful punishment.

To-day *they* point at me, call me an adventuress, an impostor, a woman to be shunned by all good people; and in this they are upheld by many so-called Christians. Oh, that those who believe all that the Catholic priesthood say about me could know them as I do! Where did I inherit all the evil they accuse me of, but from a system born in hell,—nurtured in hell! Where did I learn so much of the sins against the decalogue?—"IN THE SACRED PRECINCTS OF THE CONFESSIONAL." Where were my ears polluted by vile, filthy insinuations?—"IN THE CONFESSIONAL." Who instructed me as to the sins of impurity, and defined to me the sins against nature? The PRIEST in the sacred precincts of the confessional!

Who was it that on one occasion asked whether, when kneeling before the image of Christ on the cross, I was tempted with thoughts of licentiousness in regard to our Lord? Who? THE DEBAUCHED and debased priest, Father Hayes, in the confessional of the convent in Arno's Court, Bristol. Who was it told me there was nothing unusual in a priest having illicit intercourse with women, and that often it was the only way by which a priest could keep from open scandal; that the Church dealt leniently

with such extreme cases; and that by a woman's submitting herself to a priest under such circumstances, she was doing that which would find favour in the eyes of God? Who told me this? The holy confessor, in the sacred precincts of the confessional of the convent in Bristol one Saturday afternoon, when he was sitting there in a state of intoxication.

Who was it that ruined my life and made me what I was in the convent? Father Egan, who to-day, restored to the bosom of Holy Mother Church, sheilded under her protection, celebrates Mass, forgives sins, buries the dead, receives the homage alike of Catholic and Protestant.

And so it is ever. The weak suffer; the strong escape. Yet would I warn Protestant mothers against sending their daughters to a convent school for the purpose of being educated. The time may come when, with anguish of soul and many bitter tears, you will regret the step.

You were, perhaps, warned by friends that your daughter's religious views would be tampered with, but you would not heed. Your husband was aspiring for some political recognition, and the best way to secure the requisite number of votes was through the priest: and to reach the priest your daughter had to be sent to the convent school. Your husband's name would then be on the list of sympathizers; his cheque-book would be at the command of the bishop. Your husband succeeded for a few years; he was a political light, his name appeared in the prints of our daily papers. He was banqueted; asked

to preside at meetings at which Roman Catholic priests and prelates were the principal speakers, and, as you walked down the street or entered the hall of reception, you heard the whisper: "There is Mrs. ———, the wife of Senator ———; or, Congressman ———, or, Mayor ———;" and as with feelings of satisfaction you took your seat, your foolish nature did not realize the sacrifice that had been offered up.

How swiftly the years have flown by! Your eye has lost its lustre, your step is feeble, your hair is white. Your husband's voice is no longer heard on the public platform; his name appears not in print, and no one troubles (as far as politicians are concerned) whether he is dead or alive. He is past his usefulness, and long ago another was found to take his place; and now you sit together with nothing of the past but its memories.

Hush! Out from that past rises up a figure; she stands before you a young, bright, happy, joyous girl, your daughter. And as you look upon her in the light of those earlier years, you remember that you had hoped to spend the evening of your life surrounded by her love. You looked forward to the time when her children would climb to your knee, and you would caress and love them. You pictured yourself at last having your daughter to be with you when the final parting came. This was your dream. Now the awakening. — Where is your daughter? Do you see the walls of the convent looming out in the distance? Come with me, and, as you pass through the

massive door, follow me. Here we are in the cloister. We walk along until we come to the church. We enter, and there in the pews are the silent, black-robed Sisters. The stillness of death prevails; the evening shadows have deepened into the shades of night; the lamps burn low. Now, we see one of the Sisters approach the organ and softly the notes roll out, the "STABAT MATER." The rest of the nuns unrobe their left shoulder, and as they join in singing the "Stabat Mater," they hold in their hands a discipline, and with it they scourge themselves. Do you see that young nun on the left hand side of the organ? Do you see the pain expressed in every feature? Do you hear the groan that involuntarily escapes from her lips? Do you recognize in that pale, sad-faced, black-robed woman the bright, happy girl you sent to the convent school?

Let us proceed further. We leave the church, and, ascending twelve steps, find ourselves in a room comfortably furnished. A man in the guise of a priest of Rome is seated on a sofa. The door opens, and the young girl we noticed in the church enters the room, and, as with down-cast eyes she kneels to receive the priest's blessing, a look of loathing and fear passes over her features.

"Come and sit down here, my daughter; I desire to speak with you."

With trembling steps the girl approaches the sofa, and the priest, taking her hand, says: "Why so fearful of me, my child?"

And, drawing her down beside him, he places his arm

around her waist; his hot, liquor-fumed breath fans her cheek. His coarse sensual lips are pressed to hers; she shrinks away in loathing; her womanly modesty is outraged; she struggles to liberate herself—too late! Poor, helpless girl, she has not sufficient physical strength to overcome the wretch that holds her; her piercing cries for help are not heard outside the room. Exhausted, she lies in the grasp of this spiritual father, and before she leaves the room her purity has been violated, and she becomes the toy and convenience of this "protector" (*sic*) of morality.

Follow me again. We pass down two flights of stairs—how dark and damp it is here! Come, let us peep through the door of the room at the end of the cloister. Hush, tread softly! What sound is that we hear? Sobs? Surely not sobs? Yes; deep, bitter, heartrending sobs! Look in; do you see the figure lying prostrate on the cold, damp floor? Ah! how the sobs shake her slight frame! She speaks. What does she say? Bend your ear and listen: "Oh God! my God, let me die! I cannot bear this any longer; I gave up ALL—father, mother, home, friends, because they told me, these priests and nuns, that by doing so I would secure heaven. Where is the joy? Where the peace they depicted to me? Oh, *years that have passed*, COME back, come back to me! Give me once more my youth, my home, my mother's love, my innocence, my peace of mind, my faith in God. Oh, for one hour of the time when I was free; before I ever entered into this hell upon

earth! Oh, mother! Mother, would to God I had died ere you ever sent me to the convent school, for I am ruined body and soul." Ah me, how she sobs! Do you recognise in her your once happy daughter? What! you cannot bear it! Yet you sold her to Rome, and your price was the satisfaction of your own and your husband's political and social ambition. What think you of your bargain? What do you say? You would recall the years if you could, and undo all the past? Too late, too late! and soon at God's judgment bar you must render up an account.

"Oh, Rome, thou woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, thou Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth, thou who hast become drunken with the blood of the saints, thou destroyer of the home, thou enemy of pure womanhood, thou murderer of helpless infancy, I KNOW THEE AS THOU ART. I, who have suffered, I whose life hath been blighted by thy baneful influences, I rise up from all thy darkness, thy impurities and oppression, to warn the womanhood of the land against thee, thou ravening wolf in sheep's clothing."

CHAPTER XX.

THE WILLING SLAVE.

I HAD been in the convent now some three years and six months, and in another three months I would, if found qualified, take my professional vows. By this time I had become quite used to the rule of blind obedience. There had been times when I had hard struggles. I was young, and had seen a good deal of the world. My proud, domineering spirit was completely broken. From an almost unbearable woman, I had become the willing slave of my spiritual superiors. Blind obedience to the will of others is essential to the soul who seeks to live a cloistered life in the penitential convent of Arno's Court, Bristol. Indeed, I failed to recognize myself. Was I happy? No; anything but that. I carried out the rules of the convent mechanically, and had made up my mind to remain there for life. Sister Mary Venerable Eudes encouraged me in this intention, and on several occasions we had lengthy conversations on the subject. There were many rules she explained to me, and frequently gave me public humiliations in order that she might test my vocation to take the black veil and silver cross. These humiliations I would receive quietly, submissively kissing the floor, whether the accusations made against me were just or unjust. On several occasions I had been locked up in the clothesroom

for hours and kept without supper; frequently I had been obliged to take breakfast or supper off the floor in the refectory. So that at the time referred to in the commencement of this chapter, having been so long in the cloister, I used to be intrusted with many little duties. I was an expert needlewoman, and could undertake any kind of work, however difficult. I had learned to cut out and arrange every kind of garment.

Sometimes Sister Venerable Eudes or the Mother Superior would decide that during the season of Lent no kind of seasoning should be used in our food. If, at such times, Sister Mary St. Pascoe was on duty in the refectory, she would endeavor to make the food, under the circumstances, as palatable as possible. For instance, she would, by mistake (done purposely), use the salt-cellar instead of the flour dredger; and, whilst on duty in the refectory, she would occupy the pew in the church with Sister Mary Venerable Endes during the celebration of Mass. It was amusing to hear the poor, little, anxious Sister, as she repeated her rosary, with certain additions of her own, thus:—

Holding her beads in her hands, she would commence —“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.” Then, stooping towards Sister Mary Venerable Eudes, she would whisper, “DEAR SISTER, DON’T YOU THINK THE PROBATIONERS MIGHT HAVE AN ONION IN THEIR SOUP TO-DAY?” And then

immediately take up the second part of the rosary—"Holy Mary, mother of God! pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, amen." Then, again turning to Sister Venerable Eudes, she would say: "*Dear Sister, that bold cat pulied up some herbs in the garden this morning. I have them in my pocket; and it is against our rule of holy poverty to waste them. Had I not better put them into the soup?*" and in the same breath she would continue "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee," etc. etc., until at last Sister Venerable Eudes would say, in despair, "YES; ONIONS OR ANYTHING."

Having gained her point, Sister Mary St. Pascoe would become very devotional during the rest of the service.

I recall to mind how superstitious she was in respect to holy souls. It was during the time she had charge of the clothing that, on one occasion, I asked her to give me a pair of shoes that would fit me. My feet were very painful, but she became annoyed with me, saying, "Is this the way ye come to do penance here? Shure, it's mistaken you are, Adelaide, in your vocation. Is it the black ye want and the cross, and then come and say that it's too tinder your feet are for the shoes? Shure, it's worse suffering you will be after having when ye are in purgatory."

I said nothing; but, a few days afterwards, I took occasion to enter into conversation with her, and said that I was not feeling very well; and that, in the event of dying, I would come to her for prayers. A look of consternation passed over her face; and, a few hours

afterwards, she called me out of the class-room, and taking me into the clothes-room, inquired very solicitously about my feet. Then, producing a finer pair of boots, she said, "There, Sister, put these on; see if they will fit you."

I did so; and then she said, "There now; there now, child, it's no wonder your poor feet were uncomfortable. You feel better now; do you not?"

I thanked her; and then, turning round to me, she said, "Remember, now, that when you die you must not trouble me for prayers."

I promised her this; and afterwards related the circumstance that evening, during recreation, to my companions, as well as to Sister Mary of Holy Compaission, who was spending the hour with us. We all enjoyed a good laugh at the expense of Sister Mary St. Pascoe.

One afternoon, Sister Mary St. Thais sent me with a message to the clothes-room, where Sister St. Pascoe was busy. It was during silence hours. A little gate closed off the room in which she was occupied from the cloister. As I unlocked the gate and entered the room, I found her in great distress because her poor canary bird had taken cold. It was winter, and there was a nice fire in the room. On a low chair, in front of the fire, was the bird-cage; the canary was hopping away from the bars and flying against the case.

She looked up at me as I entered, and, in a voice of distress, said, "I cannot understand what is the matter with poor Dickie, He has taken cold, poor thing, and I

have put him before the fire to get warm." Saying this, she went up to the bird and said, "Poor Dickie. Ha, you bold thing!" then again, "Can't you keep quiet? What's the matter with you?"

I took in the situation at once. The poor little Sister, in her anxiety to keep the bird warm, had succeeded in getting the cage too near the fire, making it a very undesirable place for the poor bird. So I quietly lifted the cage off the chair, and told her why I did it.

"Well, now, did you ever!" she said. "But it's strange the poor little thing should have such a cold, and yet I never heard him cough."

It was impossible to keep from laughing at the Sister's simplicity. But having delivered my message, and advising her not to place the cage so near the fire, I turned to leave the room. As I did so, the Sister's favorite cat ran past me, and, springing over the gate, cleared it, and ran down the cloister. The Sister looked at puss retreating, and, going after her, chased her back quietly to the gate. Having succeeded in getting her there, and afterwards in the room, she locked the door on her, first saying—

"Ha, you bold thing! why didn't you ask your mother's leave? Why didn't you wait till silence was over?"

I felt that if I remained any longer I, too, should break my silence grievously; and accordingly hurried away, suppressing as much as possible my laughter. But that night in the community-room we had great amusement over the episode.

A few days afterwards our mother recounted to us one of the last exploits of the Sister. It seems that afternoon some apple-dumplings, that had been cooked for the priest's dinner, and which had just been taken out of the pot, were left for one minute in the cloister outside the priest's parlor. The Sister was passing by, and she tumbled the steaming dumplings into her large apron, and hurried as fast as she could to the door of the laundry, where the penitents were employed in ironing. Calling two or three outside, she told them to open their mouths. They complied, and she filled each with a smoking-hot dumpling. The poor women had their mouths burned, and yet were obliged to burst into peals of laughter, as the poor Sister, in her anxiety that they should have the benefit of them before they were missed, kept saying, "Eat it, eat it," and kept her hand in her apron, forgetful that the dumplings were burning it, in order that she might put another into their mouths as soon as the first were swallowed.

As she was doing this, the Mother Superior passed through the laundry from the opposite door, and stood watching the proceedings with amazement. The workers in the laundry, following the gaze of the Mother Superior, saw all that was going on. How it happened was never discovered, but in an instant the Sister, finding herself the observed of all observers, hastily let her apron fall; out rolled three smoking dumplings, and the poor little Sister, in her anxiety to screen the penitents, pushed one of them aside, lost her own balance and fell, her hand coming on one of the dumplings and burst-

ing it. A shout of laughter went up. The Mother Superior could do nothing but join it, and gave the worker's an hour's talking over their work. For a couple of days Sister St. Pascoe had to keep her hand bandaged.

I look back at this moment to the days I spent in the convent at Bristol, and can honestly say that I TRIED to do the very best I could to carry out a life of penitence. I have some pleasant memories in connection with that period of my life. I had become very much attached to Sister Mary Venerable Eudes. One thing, however, did make an impression upon me, and that was the fact that so many of the priesthood were immoral. Gradually I found my respect and reverence for them diminishing; and yet, being a Roman Catholic, I would not allow myself to give way to these thoughts, but humbly confessed them, and had recourse to the blessed Virgin for help and comfort.

At that time I looked forward to spending the rest of my days within the walls of that convent, and never leaving it. There were times, however, when the monotony wore upon me. Often I found myself reverting in thought to the past, and longing that I could be once more the innocent girl I was before meeting Father Egan. Sometimes, within the precincts of the confessional, I used to speak to Father Doyle about it; and each time he made excuses for the failings of the priests. He told me that I should pray for Father Egan, and that I had gained great merit by keeping secret, amidst great temptation and trial,

the scandal that had taken place.

How often, when kneeling at confession, the liquor-perfumed breath of the priest would make me feel nauseated; and at such times—I suppose under the influence of partial intoxication—would Father Doyle ask me questions of the vilest and most insinuating character. I presume many of my readers will feel shocked when I say that a Roman Catholic priest, as a general rule, will try to have a *liaison* with a married woman in preference to one unmarried, so that in the event of any offspring no scandal will take place. Where, however, it is the case of an unmarried woman, priests, who are perfect adepts at malpractice, will see that the girl is supplied with the needful medicine, and where necessary will himself perform an operation for the purpose of hiding the evidence. It will not be amiss to mention the code of morality laid down by Pope John XXII., and sanctioned by him as the infallible head of the Church.

PAID: FOR HER TO BE COMMITTED, SANCTIONED BY POPE
JOHN XXII.

“Priests who wish to obtain authority to live in concubinage with their relatives shall pay seventy-six francs, one sou.

“An adulterous woman who desires absolution to place her beyond the reach of all pursuit, and to have a free dispensation to continue her guilty relations, shall pay to the Pope eighty-seven francs, three sous. In a

like case, the husband shall be submitted to the same tax. If they have committed incest with their children, they shall add six francs.

"Absolution and assurance against all pursuit for the crimes of rapine, robbery, and incendiarism shall cost the guilty one hundred and thirty-one francs, seven sous.

"Absolution for the simple murder of a layman is taxed at fifteen francs, four sous, eight deniers. *If the assassin has slain several persons on the same day, he shall pay no more.*

"*A husband who shall have rudely struck his wife shall pay into the chancellery three francs, four sous; if he kills her, he shall pay seventeen francs, fifteen sous: if he has committed this crime to marry another woman, he shall pay besides thirty-two francs, nine sous. They who shall have assisted the husband in the murder shall be absolved on the payment of two francs a head.*

"He who shall have murdered his child shall pay seventeen francs. If the father and mother shall have slain their child by mutual consent, they shall pay twenty-seven francs, one sou, for absolution.

"For murder of a brother, a sister, a mother, or a father, they shall pay seventeen francs, fifteen sous!

"*He who would buy absolution in advance for every accidental (!) murder which he may in future commit, shall pay one hundred and sixty-eight francs, fifteen sous.*

"A converted heretic shall pay two hundred and sixty-nine francs for his absolution. The son of a *burned heretic*,

or one *put to death* by any OTHER *ATURE*, shall not be reinstated until he has paid into the chancellery two hundred and eighteen francs, seventeen sous.

"An ecclesiastic who cannot pay his debts, and who wishes to avoid the pursuit of his creditors, shall give to the Pope seventeen francs, nine sous, and his debts shall be remitted.

"He who shall desire to break his oath and be guaranteed from all pursuit and all infamy shall pay to the Pope one hundred and thirty-one francs, fifteen sous. He shall pay three francs a head besides for all those who become his guarantees."

Who can wonder, therefore, brought up under such a system, that a man or woman has a very different conception of the moral obligation of sin? Lying and breaking promises become natural; and when a strict Romanist leaves the Church to embrace the doctrines of Christ, as taught in an OPEN BIBLE, it takes years to undo the influences and associations of his earlier education. Yet Protestants NEVER, as a rule, make allowances for this, and sometimes, through such thoughtlessness and uncharitable criticism, they cause the unhappy individual either to accept agnosticism, or to return once more to the Church, where the words of absolution pronounced over him by the priest in the confessional eases his conscience, or, more correctly speaking, his superstition.

The hardest trials I have had to pass through since leaving the convent have been of this character, and have

been kept up until I am almost wearied of **PROFESSED** Christianity. Did I not, down in the depths of my heart, love Christ, I would ere this have given up the struggle. Very little of real sunshine has penetrated my life; and I do not expect that it ever will, for my **CROSS** is to be **MISUNDERSTOOD**, **MISREPRESENTED**, and judgment to have passed without a fair hearing. But I digress, and hope my reader will pardon me.

CHAPTER XXI.

TRIED AS BY FIRE.

ONE evening I was requested to go and dust the visitors' parlor, which had been ~~in use~~ pretty constantly that day. I had only a few minutes to do it in before supper, and, as I entered the room, I saw a small book lying on the table, and thinking it might be a book of devotion belonging to some of the Sisters, I placed it in the pocket of my habit, intending to give it to the owner during the evening's recreation.

I had barely time to finish before the supper bell rang, and, on leaving the refectory after the meal was over, I was sent for by the Mother Superior, who wished to see me. I hurried to her, and she gave me some writing to do, so that I could not go into recreation that evening. I continued writing until bedtime, and consequently forgot

all about the book.

When, therefore, I had an opportunity to be alone, I knelt down by my bed to say my prayers and to make a short meditation. In order to assist me, I took up the chaplet of beads—hanging on the right-hand side of my belt; and, in doing so, my hand came in contact with the book in my pocket. Remembering under what circumstances it came into my possession, I took it out of my pocket, thinking it might probably be a book of spiritual devotion left by mistake by one of the consecrated penitents on the parlour table, and proceeded to open it. As soon, however, as my eyes fell on the page before me, I became aware of the fact that it was not a book of Catholic devotion; and, turning to the preface, discovered it to be a Protestant Bible.

To say that I was frightened only very faintly conveys to my reader just what I felt. I allowed the Bible to fall, and dared not pick it up again. I blessed and sprinkled myself with holy water, calling upon the Holy Virgin to protect me, and then tried to compose myself to sleep. But this was an impossibility; and, at last, unable to overcome the irresistible desire to read it, I once more look up the book. As my bed was in the corner of the dormitory, directly under the gas-jet, I opened the Bible and commenced reading.

The first chapter that interested me was the fifth of the second book of Kings, giving an account of the healing of Naaman, the Syrian leper. I was particularly impressed

by the twelfth verse, in which these words occur, "*Wash, and be clean.*"

I then read **several** other portions, and became more deeply interested; and for three months (after having covered the book with black serge as is usual in convents to do with devotional books), thus disarming suspicion, I carried the book about and read it at every opportunity. I began to see that there was much in the Bible that the Church did not teach; and much it taught that could not be found in the Bible.

I felt dissatisfied with the Roman Catholic religion. There was something I wanted; I knew not what. Was it right for me to believe the Bible? Ought I not, as a faithful Catholic, to receive without questioning the definition the Church gave?

And yet the priests had never, to my certain knowledge, read numerous passages in the New Testament, many of which were a revelation to me.

I had always had such implicit faith in their teachings until the Bible fell into my hands. I had looked all through and through to find what the Bible taught about "Indulgences;" but found no such word in it.

I had been taught that the Church of Rome could grant an Indulgence. And here I want to state what is really meant by an "Indulgence." Some think it is a license to commit sin. This is a mistake. The true meaning, as taught by the Church of Rome, is: The Church claims power to remit temporal punishment due to sin;

first, by the merits of Jesus Christ; next by the superabundant satisfactions of the Virgin and saints. To gain the Indulgence, one must be in a state of grace,—that is, having no mortal sin,—and also perform the works of penance enjoined by the Church.

Then, again, I had searched, but in vain, for light upon the veneration shown to the Virgin; but with the exception of speaking of her as the “MOTHER OF JESUS,” it gave her no other title. Not one word went to prove that she had power in heaven. All that the Church had to prove for their worship of her was the traditions of her appearance to certain monks and nuns and others venerated as saints. Not one word about venerating relics, such as the pieces of bone or bits of clothing belonging to different saints; nothing about wearing medals. Not one word of this was in the Bible. Now the second commandment says distinctly:—

“Thou shalt not make to thyself *any* graven image, nor the likeness of *any* thing that is in *heaven* above or in the *earth* beneath. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them.”

And yet, in direct opposition to this, we had images of saints, and deliberately BOWED DOWN TO THEM.

Then the Catholic Church teaches celibacy in priests and nuns. But in my Bible I had read, in first Timothy, fourth chapter, first, second, and third verses:—

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed

seducing spirits and doctrines of devils:

“Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with as hot iron.

“FORBIDDING TO MARRY, and COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN FROM MEATS, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and KNOW THE TRUTH.”

No other people taught this doctrine but the Catholics, and this chapter I had never heard read.

I looked in my “Key to Heaven,” but could not find one single extract from Timothy, or the Epistles appointed to be read on Sundays, most of the Epistles being taken from Romans..

Then I sought to find out why the Virgin Mary should be exempted from the stain of original sin, and saw nothing in the Bible to confirm the doctrine.

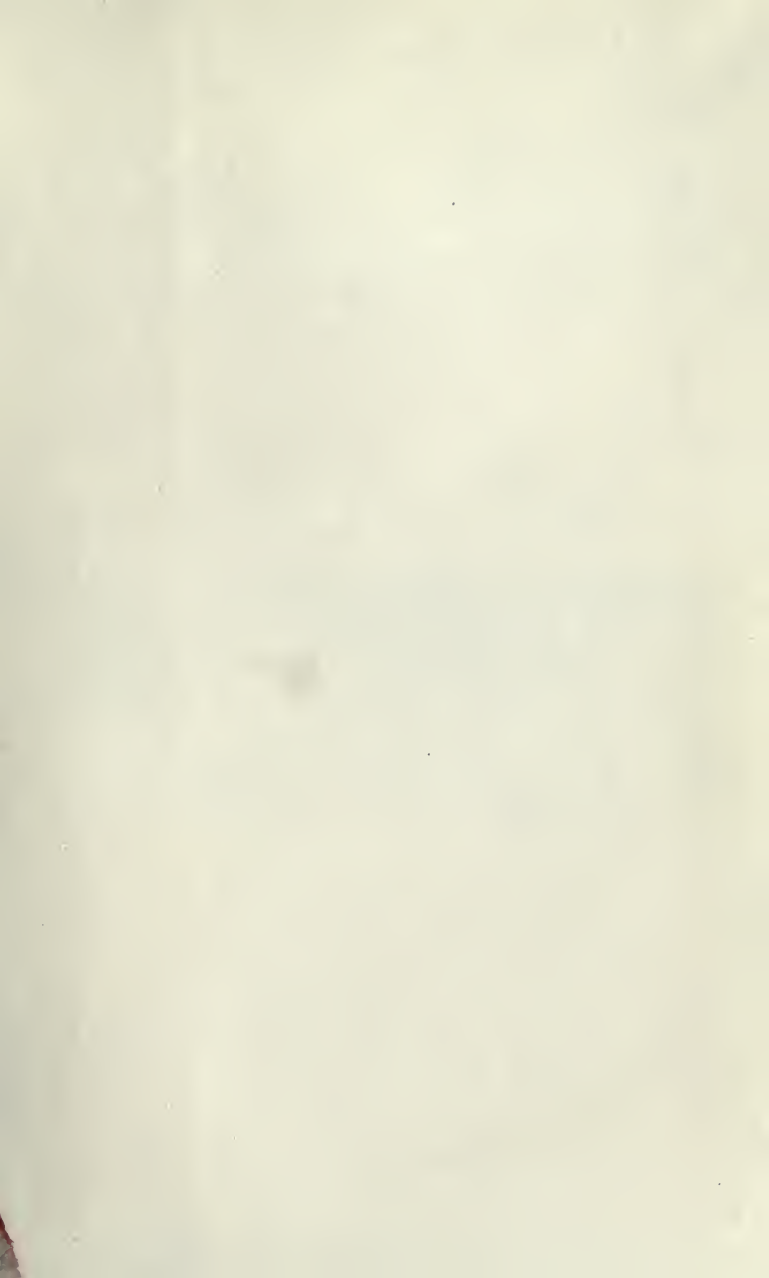
Next I sought for light on the question of Transubstantiation; and, in order to do this, I commenced, first by remarking what the Church taught in reference to Mass.

The Mass, according to the teachings of the Church, is “the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.” It teaches, also, that it is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, because the offering and the priests are the same, and that the ends for which the sacrifice of Mass is offered are the same as those of the sacrifice of the cross: First to honor and glorify God; second, to thank him for all the graces bestowed on the whole world; third, to satisfy

God's justice for the sins of men; fourth, to obtain all graces and blessings.

The difference alone exists (so the Church teaches) in the manner in which the sacrifice is offered. On the cross of Calvary Christ was really and truly slain. In the Mass there is no real shedding of blood, *nor real death*, because Christ can die no more. But the priests say they have power to change the bread and wine *into the body and blood of Christ* through the words of consecration in the Mass, which are the words of Christ, "This is my body; this is my blood." These last words certainly were said by Christ, as well as these "THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME." But after saying, "This is My body; this is My blood," he did not say to them, "And from henceforth I give you power every time you take communion, that at your command it will turn into my very body and blood." But I read the ninth chapter of Hebrews and twenty-fourth verse:

"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands (meaning, in the Roman Catholic Church, the tabernacle which stands in the centre of the altar, and in which a consecrated wafer is placed. The same wafer, the priests teach, is really and truly *the body, soul, and DIVINITY OF CHRIST*, and is therefore called the Real Presence. It is to this wafer all Catholics bow as they pass the altar, believing it to be Christ himself complete in his humanity and divinity), "which are the figures of the true, but into HEAVEN ITSELF, now to appear in the



BX
4216
.S55
A3
1892

Shepherd, Margaret L. (Margaret
Lisle), 1859-
My life in the convent :

